NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1983 $2.00

Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

Elm Street, Bishop ● Bighorn Sheep ● Owens Valley's Indian Heritage
Goldfield ● Doctor Nellie ● 'Aim Morhardt ● The Beaver Habitat
Bob Pellissier ● Wildhorse ● Coso Hot Springs

From the Publisher

As we go to press, Halloween is over. The kids didn't bring home a lot of candy, because there aren't that many streets or houses to visit. We dutifully checked their bags, but we weren't very concerned. That lovingly-made popcorn ball came from old Mrs. R—, where we spent 20 minutes of valuable Trick-or-Treat time showing off our costumes and listening to stories of by-gone Halloweens; our children learned to give their time as well as receive their treats, and we are all enriched by the experience.

We are fortunate to have people like Mrs. R—, Margaret Harlin (page 24), and Dewey Charles (page 46) with us, as reminders of how close we are to the beginning of our recorded history. In the future, when we read the impersonal condensed reports of our history books, we will better understand the humanity involved.

But small towns contain much more. Friendly cooperation. When our typesetter broke down beyond the repair of our local fixit shop, a competitor offered their machine to keep us on schedule. We owe a special thanks to Kittle Printing, Bishop, for their assistance.

This holiday season, as usual, our parties will include friends of all ages. The teens will undoubtedly congregate in one corner until the food is ready. Momentarily, we'll leave the baby with great-grandpa, who we discovered still remembers "Tickle Toes," while the rest of us set up chairs, fix the gravy, make suggestions. We'll argue, sigh, eat, make up, and agree: small town, big city — wherever family and friends get together, this sharing spirit will be with us. May it be with you.

Happy Holidays!
Sandie Pramann
PUBLISHER

Front Cover: *"First Snow" by Patty Van Dolson. Taken from the north end of Bishop looking east toward the White Mountains with White Mountain Peak.*

Inside Front Cover: *"Winter Sun" by Patty Van Dolson. Mount Morrison with Convict Lake.*

Inside Back Cover: *"McGee" by Patty Van Dolson. Mount Morgan and McGee Creek with Highway 395 in the foreground.*

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Letters to the Editor

I just read "Keeper of the Asses" written by Vern Burandt (July/August 1982). I am sure you got a lot of flack for publishing this article. I want to give you a pat on the back for doing so, because I believe Mr. Burandt knows what he is talking about, and has been brave enough to be realistic in his presentation.

I am all for propogating the health and welfare of ALL of the earth's creatures, don't get me wrong. But that also involves the duty to be fair-minded in "husbanding" the natural resources, and making an attempt to distribute them equitably.

Keep up the good work!

Jeanne Lopez
Keeler, CA

This is to advise you that we now live up here. Your beautiful magazine helped make up our mind. Thank you.

Isabelle Cyr
Crowley Lake, CA

I am presently a teacher for the L.A. Unified School District and am teaching a course on California Natural History. If you have any suggestions about materials (on the Sierra)...please contact me.

William Thompson
Arcadia, CA

Ed: We have received several requests for information and materials for classroom study. When possible, we make every attempt to supply suitable references, or direct teachers and students to the appropriate local agencies.

Regarding the cover picture on the August/September issue, Mt. Tom by Dick Coons. By any chance would a lithographed repro of this be available, and/or others of his works?

Maury Koeberle
San Juan Capistrano, CA

Ed: We regret that the painting of Mt. Tom by Dick Coons is not available as a lithograph. However, a lithograph of the oil painting, "Virginia City — Queen of the Comstock", on pages 8-9 of the July/August 1982 issue may be purchased for $150 through SIERRA LIFE.

I remember camping with my parents in Yosemite in the mid-1950s. After dinner we would go to the dump and watch bears rummage through the garbage. Often there was a ranger there, telling us the names of habitual visitors. It was certainly more exciting than the zoo, but I'm glad the Park Service has outgrown its child-like enjoyment of this practice, as I reluctantly have, for the sake of the bears. Now, if they'd just figure out some way to reinstate my other childhood favorite of Yosemite, the Firefall.

Alice Roberts
Anaheim, CA

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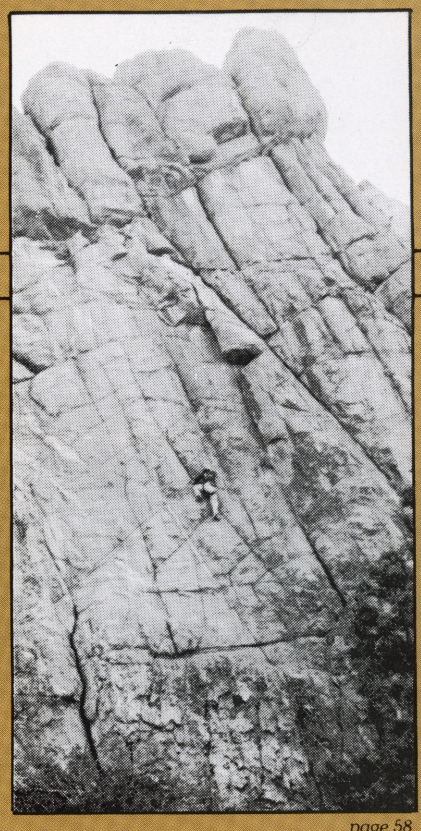

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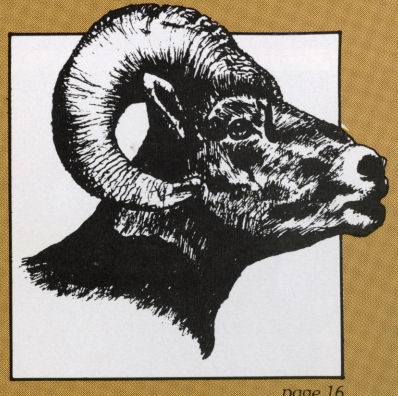

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ELM STREET

What makes it so special?

Photos and Interviews by Gary Smyth

People often comment on how much they enjoy taking a leisurely stroll down Elm Street in Bishop.

George and Marie Lander, from Southern California, were in Bishop this fall with their two small daughters. They had come to the High Sierra to photograph fall colors, and had their first encounter with Elm Street. "It was Halloween. We decided to take our girls trick-or-treating and ended up on Elm Street," says Mrs. Lander. "I remember feeling so safe as we walked along. The leaves crunched under our feet and the smell of pine filled the air. It is really a special place. There was something magic about walking on Elm Street that night."

What makes Elm Street so special? We set out to find an answer, and found a bit of history and a lot of friendly people along the way.

Elm Street runs east and west through the city of Bishop. The block that piqued our interest lies between Hobson Street, on the east, and Home Street on the west. At each end of this block stand two stone monuments with the word "Elmhurst" printed on them.

Our search for the origin of these monuments took us back to 1912, when it was decided to sub-divide this particular tract of land. The stone monuments were constructed, and lots went up for sale. Unfortunately, real estate sales were slow. By 1920, sales hadn't improved, and plans for the sub-division failed.

Dr. Ed Bulpitt, retired Bishop dentist, remembers roller skating on the sidewalks of Elm Street in the mid-1920s when he was a small child. "There weren't many houses at that time," he recalls.

continued on next page ...

Elm Street, about 1913, taken from Hobson Street looking toward Home Street with Mt. Tom in background. Forbes photo courtesy of the Finley Hartshorns.

***Elm Street** continued*

Land on Elm Street began selling well a few years later, with most homes being built between 1934 and 1940.

On the southwest corner of Elm and Home streets stands the Women's Improvement Club. This home was originally built in 1918 by a prominent Bishop lawyer named Swallow. Mrs. Laura Lutz remembers the Swallow family because they were all very tall. "I remember seeing the upstairs bathtub, and thinking it was awfully long!" says Mrs. Lutz. "But the water pressure was pretty bad back in those days. It probably took awhile to fill that tub."

Mrs. Lutz' in-laws built a home on Elm Street in 1919. The family also owned a grocery store on Main Street. In 1934 they sold their property to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, as did many of their neighbors during those years.

The old Waterson house stands on the northwest corner of Elm and Home streets. It was constructed entirely of redwood, and appropriately named "The Redwood Apartments" at one time. In 1931, the house became a hospital with Drs. Scott and Anderson in attendance. The hospital remained at this location until the early 1940s, when it was re-located to the Bishop Airport.

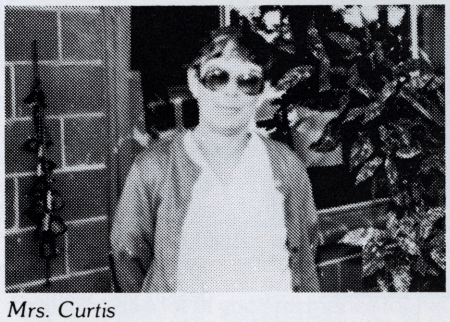
C.W. Parcher helped plant the trees that now line Elm Street. It was planned at that time to plant elm trees on all the streets of Bishop, but that plan never materialized.

Our search for more historical data took us to the Bishop Public Works Department, where a helpful staff located one of the original Elm Street building permits. The oldest permit on file was for the house at 636 West Elm. This home was constructed in 1939 by Pacific System Homes, Inc., and was the home of L.L. Bradley. Total construction cost — $5,200.

Families have come and gone on Elm Street in the past 70 years. Although much of that history has been lost, the families living there today are making history of their own, and were kind enough to allow us into their homes.

In 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Curtis moved to Bishop and built their house on Elm Street. Before that time, they had spent their summer vacations in Bishop, and when an opening came to teach Auto Shop at the high school, they jumped at the chance.

"Elm Street is the most beautiful spot to live in the entire United States." That's quite

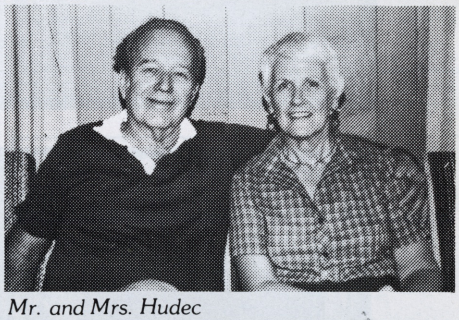


Mrs. Curtis

a statement, from a couple who has traveled extensively throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. "Here you have four distinct seasons, but a very mild temperature range," says Mrs. Curtis. "Then if you throw in the 14,000-foot mountains on either side of Bishop, and the people who are just great, it can't be beat."

Al and Jo Francis Hudec lived here in 1953, but his work then necessitated a move to Texas. A year and a half ago, he retired and returned to Bishop to buy a home on Elm Street. "I came to get time with the family. The pace is a little slower and the people much friendlier here. We picked Elm Street because we loved its beauty."

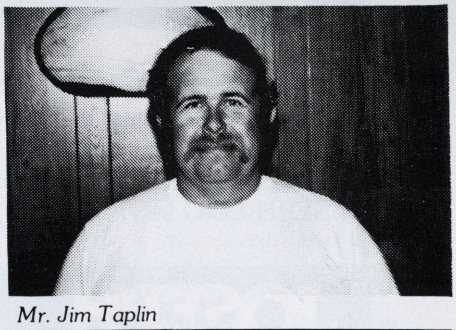
What's their favorite season? Summer... and fall. "The summers are nice and cool here" (that's about 19 years of living in Texas speaking). "And the fall colors are especially gorgeous here on Elm Street."



Mr. and Mrs. Hudec

Hunting and fishing were the primary attractions for Jim Taplin and his wife Marilyn. In 1972 they moved here from Orange, California, to teach at the high school and elementary school. Marilyn's parents have lived on the same block since 1946.

But the outdoor sports are only part of Jim's regular schedule now. Besides his



Mr. Jim Taplin

regular teaching duties, he coaches the high school baseball team, teaches photography,

continued on page 11

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SLM—83

and is helping to organize major fast and slow pitch softball tournaments, as well as aiding in the development of the Millpond Recreational facility.

Jim cites the friendliness of the people in Bishop as a definite drawing point. "People are always willing to lend a helping hand when needed. Elm Street itself is reminiscent of the Midwest with its older homes and canopy effect of the trees arching high over the street."

Mr. and Mrs. Diebert moved to Bishop in 1925, and she is now living in her fourth house since then. All four homes have been on Elm Street. One of the primary motives for their move here from Los Angeles was their interest in sports—skiing, hunting, flyfishing. After 25 years of teaching elementary school, Mrs. Diebert now remains active in her church, women's club, and many community affairs. "The most valuable asset to Bishop is its people. They are wholesome, friendly and cooperative.

Mrs. Diebert

You can always get a smile."

She remembers especially the Big Snow in the mid-1930s. At that time, her two daughters could slide from the roof to the street in the snow. "My six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren would like to try that someday, too!"

Mrs. O.L. Tockey moved to Bishop in 1942 from Nebraska. She is very proud of her three sons, one daughter, and 40

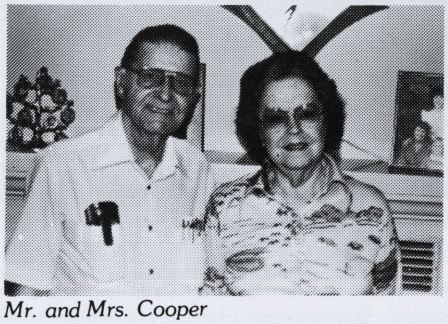
Mrs. Tockey

grandchildren and great-grandchildren, some of whom still reside in Bishop. And of course she is proud of her Elm Street residence. On the street she is known as Gramma or Gramma T.

When asked what kind of changes she has seen in Bishop since she moved here, she says, "The town was smaller then. Now there's so many people I don't know."

Owen and Thelma Cooper moved to Elm Street 35 years ago. Mr. Cooper is past owner of Chalfant Press, where he published four regular weekly newspapers. For 15 years, he also published a Japanese newsletter for the Lone Pine area, where many Japanese were held during World War II.

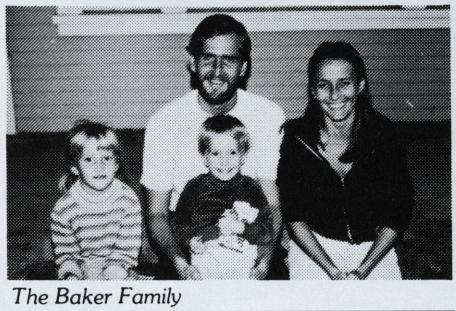
Both Owen and his wife of 47 years say without hesitation that "Elm Street is the prettiest street in town." Occasionally they meet and talk with some of the out-of-



Mr. and Mrs. Cooper

towners, and a comment they often hear is, "Every time we come to Bishop, we walk down this street."

Chet and Mary Baker have lived on Elm Street for the past four years with their three daughters, ages 12, 6 and 3. Mary says Elm



The Baker Family

Street holds a lot of good memories for her. "My best friend when I was growing up used to live in the same house I live in now." These same memories are now being developed for her daughters, who look at Elm Street as a "fairy tunnel" and a "magic place."

Well, back to our question. What's so special about Elm Street? We think its the people. From the men who tried to develop it in 1912, to the families living there today.

Did C.W. Parcher realize, so many years ago, that his elm trees would create a "fairy tunnel?" □

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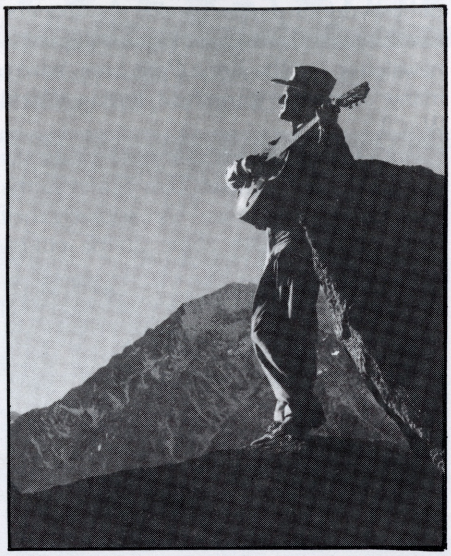
RENAISSANCE MAN

'AIM MORHARDT

by Jane Fisher

A man of many parts, a man for all seasons, a Renaissance man... Joseph Emil ('Aim) Morhardt can unequivocally honor the promise of each domain.

During a lifetime devoted as much to the advancement of others as to the practice of his own talents, 'Aim has performed every discipline of the fine arts, and done



'Aim Morhardt, relaxing with his music in the country that he loves.
Photo by Genevieve Morhardt

it well. A career that began in college, where he received his Masters degree in music and taught dance, evolved into commercial photography when he traveled with Zane Grey, continued on in the South Seas, Australia, Hollywood, and Bishop. It included acting, directing — plays, pageants and orchestras; composing, singing and playing his own music; writing —

continued on next page ...

plays, books, poetry, stories, articles; photography, painting, an impressive spectrum of craft arts, teaching... and prospecting.

"I can't think of anything else creative that came my way," he says, "because if it had, I would have done something about it."

Morhardt has not been, in any sense, just a dabbler in the arts. Equipped with an education in the basic principles of music and art, enhanced by a true natural talent and joy of life, he has been able to see the majority of his works receive public acclaim in one form or another.

Things didn't look too fortuitous when Morhardt set out to sell his car, as he and his mother were unable to make a success of the family candy factory after his father's death. As he stood at the newspaper counter preparing his ad, across from him stood an acquaintance preparing a job description. Putting down his pen, the man said, "Say, 'Aim, you did the photography work for the yearbook, didn't you? Romer (Grey, son of Zane Grey and a friend of Morhardt's) and I are starting a studio. Would you like a job?"

"It took me about one and a half seconds to decide I wanted a job," Aim recalls. "And so we went to work." The studio was located on Zane Grey's extensive properties in Altadena, and the boys did a creditable job until the summer they decided to relocate to Catalina.

"We spent a fine summer spending money, playing with the girls and boardwalking, but the chap we had in the retail establishment ran off with the funds," Morhardt says. The boys returned to do movies and stills for Zane Grey's books of travel and adventure. After they had done some work — and some exciting white water playing — on the Umpqua and Rogue rivers of Oregon — they set out on a year's sojourn in Tahiti and New Zealand.

Grey (variously answering to "The Old Man," "Z.G.," and "Doc," for the years he had been a dentist), was hunting for world records in sport fishing, specifically the black marlin in southern waters.

It is not possible for a writer to do justice to the heterogeneous life of a man who never did things in categories; better an artist who can layer multi-colored sheets of film until the sum of the man takes shape. Morhardt had started writing poetry and never stopped. "These are the most important elements of my life, bar none," he says. "If I have anything to say, I have already said it in poetry. There isn't much audience for serious poetry; it is like serious music I have written — what do I do with it? It sits in

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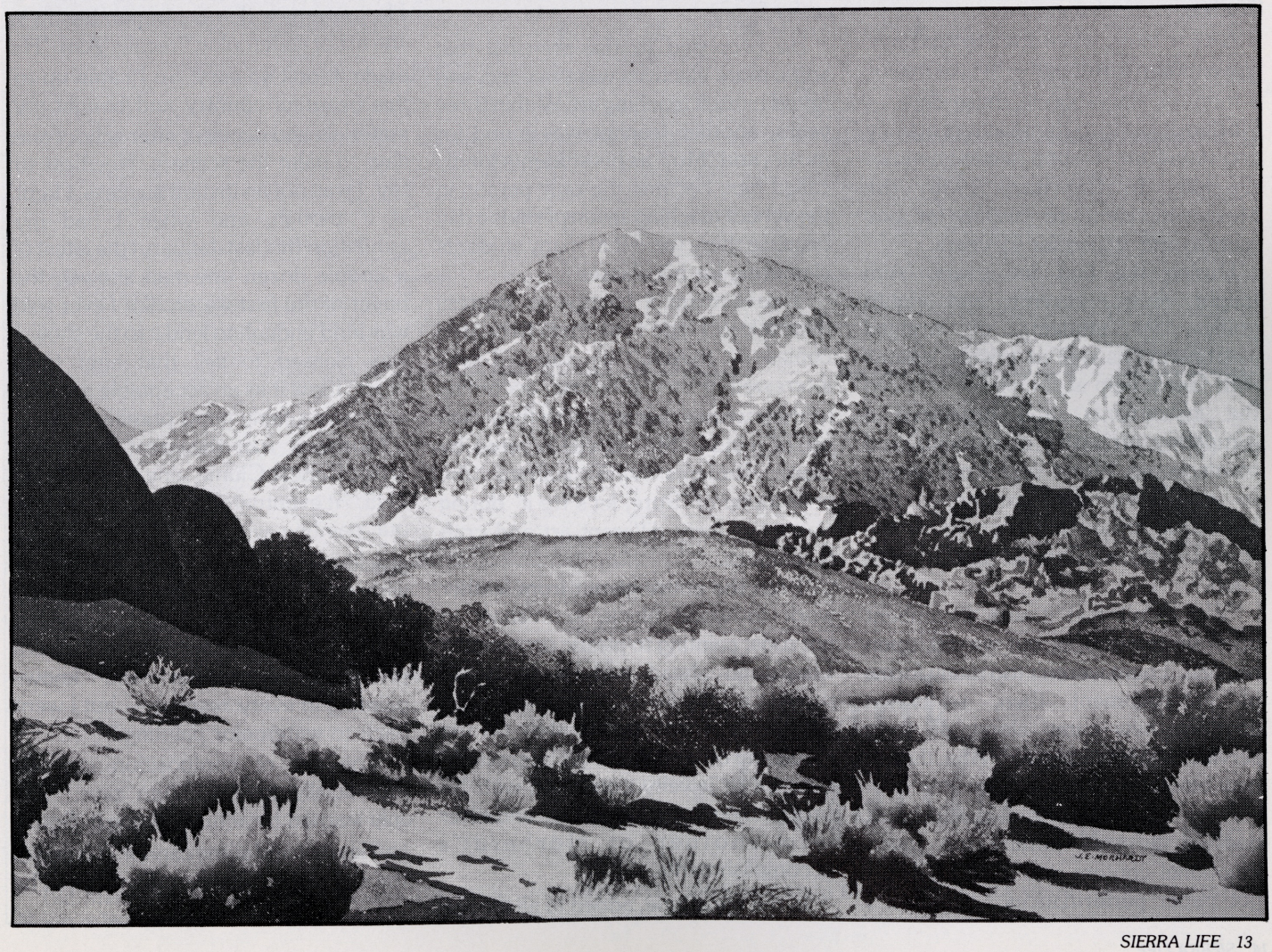
Watercolors by J.E. 'Aim Morhardt.
At left, Death Valley.
Mt. Tom, Bishop, shown below.



my filing cabinets and there it will remain. And yet, it makes absolutely no difference, because I *have to do it.*"

So while Zane Grey was writing of Morhardt's fishing prowess — with no small amount of envy — Morhardt was not only taking the photos for the books, but writing his own impressions of the venture. His island poetry is not only rich in imagery and color, but a very advanced form for the time in which he wrote.

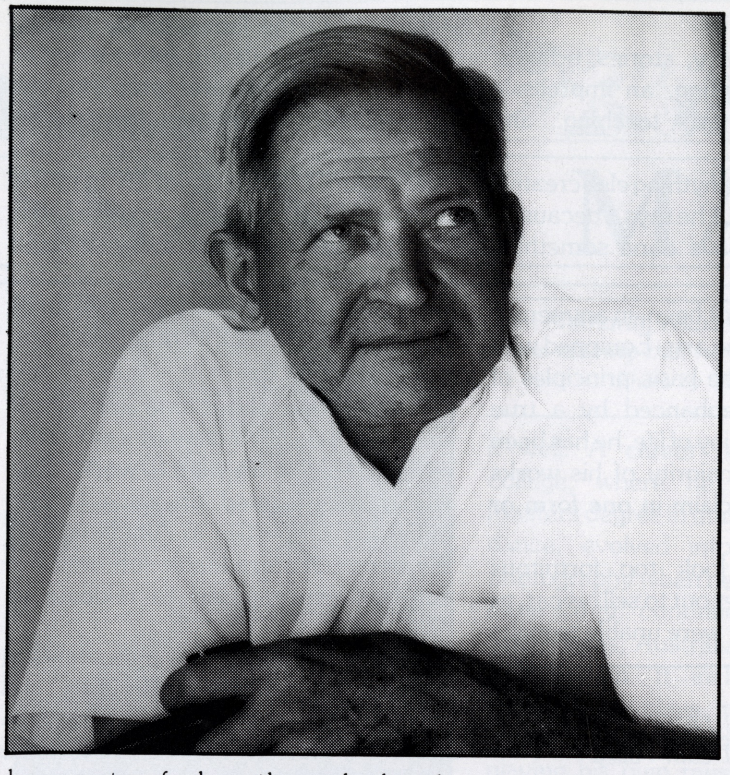
After the islands came marriage to the lovely, understanding Genevieve, Isolde to his Tristram, and another Z.G. trip to Australia, where he and Gen stayed on. He had been asked to work for Cinesound Corporation, Australia's only motion picture company. The Morhardts found Australian pay scales not up to American standards, went to England but learned no one but the English were allowed to work there because of the scarcity of jobs, and came back to Hollywood, where 'Aim became film editor for Grand National Studios.

A year later, when the studios gave him a month's furlough — which meant a month's starvation in those days — Morhardt went to the teachers agency and found that Bishop needed a music teacher. In February 1938, the Morhardts came to Bishop for one month, and stayed for 45 years.

During the first ten years, 'Aim taught music, seventh and eighth grades, 94 students of stringed instruments as well as private lessons with Gen's help at the piano, serviced the instruments, and organized a symphony orchestra of students and townspeople. World War II put an end to travel for the symphony, and Morhardt turned his energies to the "East Line Street Quartet and Drinking Club."

"We didn't feel it was incumbent upon us to perform, but we did, upon request. There weren't too many forms of entertainment then, so when anything new came along, all forty service organizations said, 'Aha, there's new blood.'"

After ten years of music, Morhardt decided he was putting too much emotional content into it. "If I didn't, I got paper performances," he says. "I began to feel rather depleted. Prospecting (which he had begun as soon as he discovered rocks) was a lot easier."



'Aim Morhardt at home. Photo by Bill Kelsey

He proposed to the principal that some more electives were needed, and found himself teaching art. Within three years, another teacher was found for music, and "Mo," as his students fondly called him, became the only person in the school teaching seven periods a day because there were that many students clamoring for his classes.

"I gave them a chance to express themselves. I didn't ask them to be little copies of myself," he says. "I was interested in their progress, according to their wishes, according to their own set of mind." "Mo" is still revered by those students who learned the philosophy of "Sure, let's try it" during classes in forty different art and craft techniques.

"I ran the entire gamut from leather work to wood block, scrimshaw to hot rods, painting to plastic ornaments. They'd go ahead and I'd go ahead running a little faster, and pretty soon we'd have a new pot of stew on the stove and others would get interested." Classes in jewelry combined with his prospecting turned turquoise and silver into another of Morhardt's accomplishments.

In the meantime, added to all the rest was a growing interest in painting. "I had a friend who became head of the art department at the University of Hawaii. He gave me a demonstration lesson in the art of watercolor," recalls 'Aim. "He made it look so easy! So I came up to this beautiful country and bought my materials and decided, after school one day, to paint the scenery. Needless to say, I was not an instant success. I kept at it though, and when I had my exhibition this last January (the latest of a couple dozen one-man shows), the buyer of the *first* watercolor I ever sold was kind enough to lend it to the show. I was pleased to see that after forty years, I saw it as an acceptable painting — it was a fairly good primitive!"

Morhardt met the great landscape artist, Robert Clunie, one afternoon in 1945. "It eventuated that I wanted to go out painting with him. He, being the gracious man he is, said, 'That's fine with me.' So I went out into the field with him and he decided I should paint in oils. I learned a great deal — Bob is a profound philosopher and knows painting in every respect — but I went back to watercolor painting."

"The art of composition can be superficially taught," 'Aim says, "but only learned by actually doing it. Some can learn it and some cannot. It is one of the signs of a mature craftsman that he

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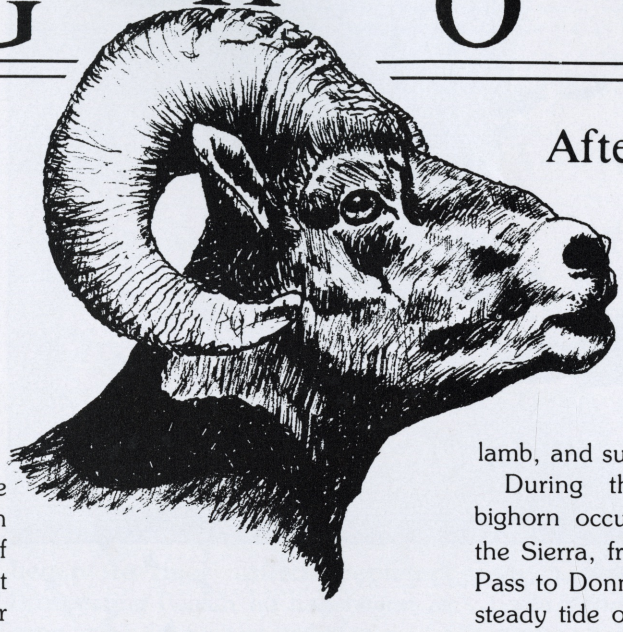
BIGHORN

Sheep of the Sierra Nevada

After 130 years of decline, are they making a comeback?

Text and photos
by Mike McWherter



The year is 1834, spring in the Sierra Nevada. A herd of bighorn rams is browsing in the shadow of Mt. Langley. Nearby a pregnant ewe is making her way to higher and more rugged terrain to give birth to her lamb. Momentarily she stops to notice a dust cloud far below in the Owens Valley and then continues on unconcerned. The dust cloud disappears. Joseph Walker's expedition into the Owens Valley has temporarily come to a halt. His group is the first white men to enter the Owens Valley and is a prelude of what will spell doom for the Mt. Langley rams, the ewe, her lamb, and subsequent offspring.

During the next 150 years bighorn occupying other areas of the Sierra, from south of Walker's Pass to Donner Pass, are to see a steady tide of immigrants, settlers, miners, hunters, domestic sheep, trail builders, and recreationists. But as the surge builds, Sierra bighorn herds disappear. One of the first herds to vanish occupied the

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Donner Pass area, gateway for the gold-seekers of 1849. But other herds would also disappear: bighorn of the Kaweah Peaks, Rock Creek, Yosemite, and of course the Mt. Langley herd. By 1979 only one viable herd, on Mt. Baxter, remained, totaling about 220 individuals. The only other herd, on Mt. Williamson, is a remnant herd of about thirty individuals, whose future is uncertain.

Before white men came to California, bighorn were numerous along the Sierra crest. The bighorn of the Sierra, like other North American bighorn, trace their origin to ancestral Asian types. During the Pleistocene epoch, great ice sheets covered large expanses of the northern latitudes. It was a time when representatives of the sheep genus *Ovis* were spreading throughout Asia, eventually finding their way across the Bering Straits, perhaps on some ancient land bridge exposed by water locked up in the advancing glaciers. By the late Pleistocene, members of *Ovis* had established themselves in the mountainous areas of North America. Today, the modern descendants of these ancestral North American types are divided into two groups or species according to their horn structure. They are the "thinhorn" and the "bighorn." The thinhorn (*Ovis dalli*) includes the Alaskan white Dall varieties and the black Stone's sheep found in the Yukon and British Columbia. The bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*) occur south of the Peace River in Canada to nearly the tip of Baja California and east to the badlands of the Dakotas. The bighorn comprise seven subspecies or races. Bighorn of the Sierra are one of these races and their decline occurred with the arrival and activities of white men in California.

After Joseph Walker's entry into the Owens Valley in 1834, many others followed. California held the lure of promise. For many, there was fertile soil on which to settle and to start a new life. For others, there was the promise of instant wealth in the gold fields of the Mother Lode country. They continued to come: explorers, adventurers, settlers, and miners. California's scant population of 2,000 Americans at the time of the discovery of gold in 1848 had swelled to over 53,000 by the end of 1849. A year later California was a state. The growth continued. By 1873 there seemed to be clear evidence of the bighorn's decline, for the California Legislature was prompted in that year to make hunting of them illegal, a law

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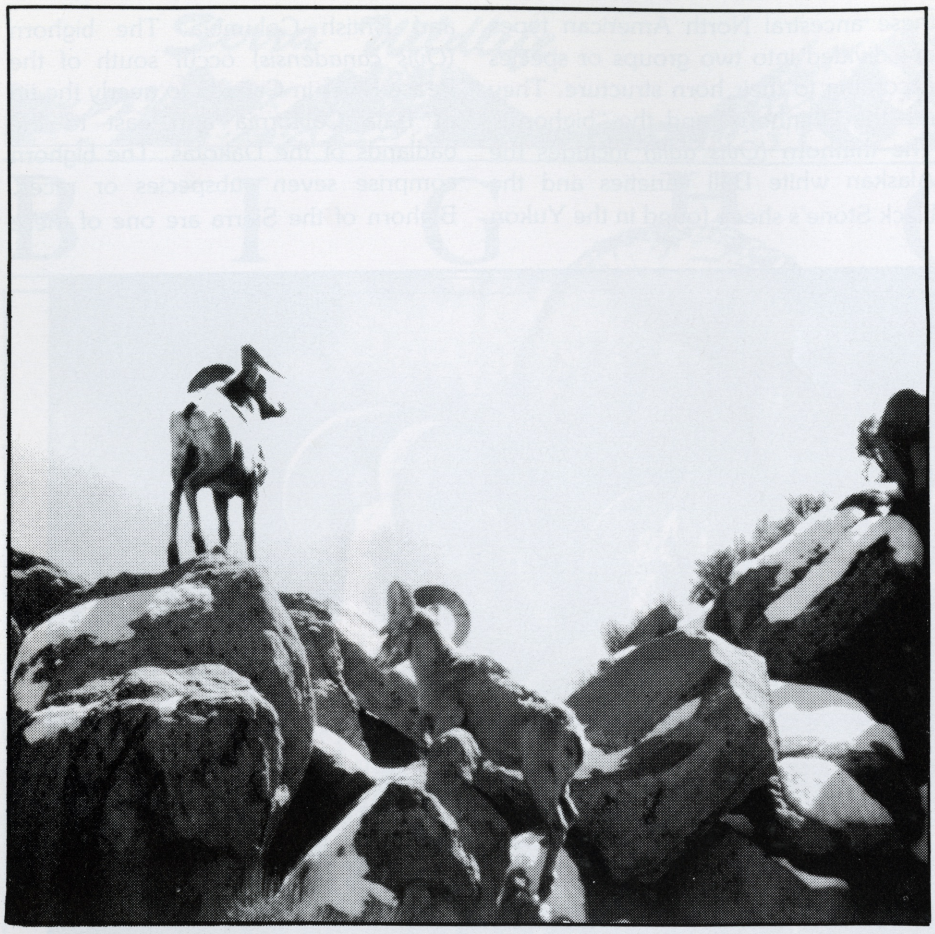

***Bighorn** continued*

which still protects them today.

More disastrous to the bighorn than the early miners and settlers was the arrival of sheepherders, driving their flocks up the mountain valleys and into bighorn habitat. Domestic sheep were destructive on mountain vegetation and they carried scabies--a decimating parasite for bighorn populations. Until the 1930s domestic sheep received almost no governmental management. About this time the U.S. Forest Service, which managed much of the land considered to be bighorn habitat, began reducing permits for domestic sheep that grazed on known ranges. In 1940 a proposal was made to establish a sanctuary for the largest remaining herd in the Sierra. It was turned down by the Forest Service and California Department of Fish and Game on the basis that more information was needed, and it was not believed that existing policies were having an adverse effect. Ten years later, in 1950, a study was made of the remaining bighorn in the Sierra with the conclusion that only five herds remained (bighorn expert John Wehausen has suggested that there were fewer), probably totaling less than 400 individuals. Twenty more years passed (thirty since its proposal in 1940) before a sanctuary of 41,000 acres of Forest Service land in the Mt. Williamson and Mt. Baxter areas was set aside in 1971. The action was based upon the belief that human disturbance was adversely affecting bighorn. By 1978 only two herds remained totaling about 250 individuals.

As of 1975 the prospect of Sierra bighorn herds regaining a foothold in areas from which they disappeared seemed only a hope. In a study by Geist (1971) an important characteristic of all bighorn was documented: bighorn rarely expand their range or colonize new areas on their own, preferring to occupy their traditional home range. Thus it became clear that if Sierra bighorn were ever to be restored to even a fraction of their original range they would have to be reintroduced into these new areas. In a study supported by the U.S. Forest and National Park Services, which began in 1974 and spanned five years, bighorn expert John Wehausen was able to recommend that the Mt. Baxter herd was a viable enough population to be used as stock for bighorn transplants in other parts of the Sierra. Other important results of Wehausen's study, which also formed the basis for his PhD thesis, were the collection of data on the distribution, numbers, and population trends of both the Mt. Baxter and Mt. Williamson herd. He also determined the suitability of other areas of the Sierra for bighorn reintroduction. Two of these areas, Wheeler Crest and Mt. Langley, were chosen as future sites for the reintroduction.

The time was right to try something which had never before been attempted for Sierra Nevada bighorn, i.e. their reintroduction from existing stock. Would biologists be able to capture the elusive bighorn in sufficient numbers? How would the bighorn themselves react to the trauma of being captured and transplanted to a new home? Would they be able to survive, let alone increase their numbers in their new homes?

Richard Weaver, of the California Department of Fish and Game, had spent the greater part of his career working with bighorn. His extensive knowledge and experience has earned him the reputation of "Mr. Bighorn" in California. Weaver would coordinate the capture and transplant operation. He admitted that he was nervous since live trapping of wild animals is a tricky operation. Employees of the California Department of Fish and Game, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and volunteers joined in. The entire operation was carefully studied and rehearsed. It was decided to undertake the capture during winter when the bighorn migrated to the lower slopes of Mt. Baxter. Apple pulp and alfalfa were used to entice the bighorn to come under a large drop-net. On March 6, 1979, nine bighorn were safely captured near Sawmill Canyon. Four were pregnant ewes, three were rams, and two were lambs. They were transported 38 miles north and released in Pine Creek Canyon below Wheeler Crest.

The nine bighorn remained low on the Wheeler Crest for the remaining part of the 1979 winter. They moved higher as the winter snows melted. The

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four ewes each gave birth to a lamb. By summer the animals had moved to the 12,000 foot level on the Wheeler Crest and appeared to be adapting well to their new home. The end of fall and the first winter storms traditionally signal bighorn to move to lower and warmer elevations. But for some unknown reason only one ewe and lamb descended. The other bighorn remained in the colder regions above the snowline, an action which likely resulted in the deaths of two of the lambs.

On January 2, 1980, Louis Andaloro and Rob Roy Ramey II, students from the University of Santa Cruz, took over the monitoring of the Wheeler Crest herd. They had volunteered for this difficult and important task as part of their thesis projects at the University. On the morning of January 13 they discovered that one of the radio transmitters attached to an ewe had stopped transmitting. The transmitter was being used to track the ewe's progress. Andaloro and Ramey went to the area where they had last seen her in order to make visual contact. They never found the ewe but instead found tons of snow from an avalanche and several coyotes which were working over a lamb's fresh pelt. They searched several more days in the snow from the avalanche and eventually uncovered a ram that had also died. The lamb and one of the original nine bighorn reintroduced had certainly perished in the avalanche and in all probability the ewe had also similarly perished. Of the remaining three lambs, two were known to have died of other causes. The Wheeler Crest herd had gained one new lamb, with the loss of an ewe and ram.

The following spring, on March 27, 1980, Richard Weaver and his team were able to capture another 31 bighorn from the Mt. Baxter herd. Ten were released in the Warner Mountains in Northeast California. Another ten bighorn were introduced in the Lubkin Creek area of Mt. Langley. The remaining eleven were taken to the Wheeler Crest area to join the group that had been introduced the previous winter.

The group of bighorn released on Wheeler Crest on March 27, 1980 remained separate from the original herd. This new group scattered over a wide area and ranged independently until mid-April. The only mature ram in this group was killed by a mountain lion during the first week. It would seem that bighorn would be more susceptible to predation if they were ranging independently in a new area. But Andaloro observed that two other bighorn predations on Mt. Langley had one thing in common with the bighorn predation on Wheeler Crest--all three animals were radio collared with a telemetry package of highly reflective surface, making the bighorn visible to predators at great distances.

Once again winter arrived on Wheeler Crest. Seventeen bighorn descended to lower elevations. Although the animals formed small groups and were scattered over a wide area there was mixing among the two herds. Possibly four new adult deaths had occurred. If this were true the total deaths since the first reintroduction would be seven (the four new adult deaths, the ram killed by the mountain lion, and the two adults killed in the avalanche). The twenty bighorn introduced would have resulted in a herd size of seventeen. A recent conversation with Tom Blankinship, Wildlife Biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game at Bishop, revealed as of fall, 1981, the Wheeler Crest herd had increased to twenty-three. So it appears that the Wheeler Crest herd may be successful. Blankinship also pointed out that recently a mountain lion was working in the Mt. Baxter area and appeared to have a preference for bighorn. With the numerous factors which can determine population numbers it will be, as Weaver says, a few years before we can really know if the reintroduction has been a success.

As for the bighorn introduced in the Mt. Langley area there remains a big question mark. The ten bighorn introduced in March, 1980, near Mt. Langley appeared to be staying together up to April. After April they had scattered. The largest group subsequently observed numbered only three. The summer range of the rams remained unknown. One animal is believed to have moved north and joined the Mt. Williamson herd. Andaloro believes that no more than six or seven bighorn remained as of fall 1980. Even today their status is unknown.

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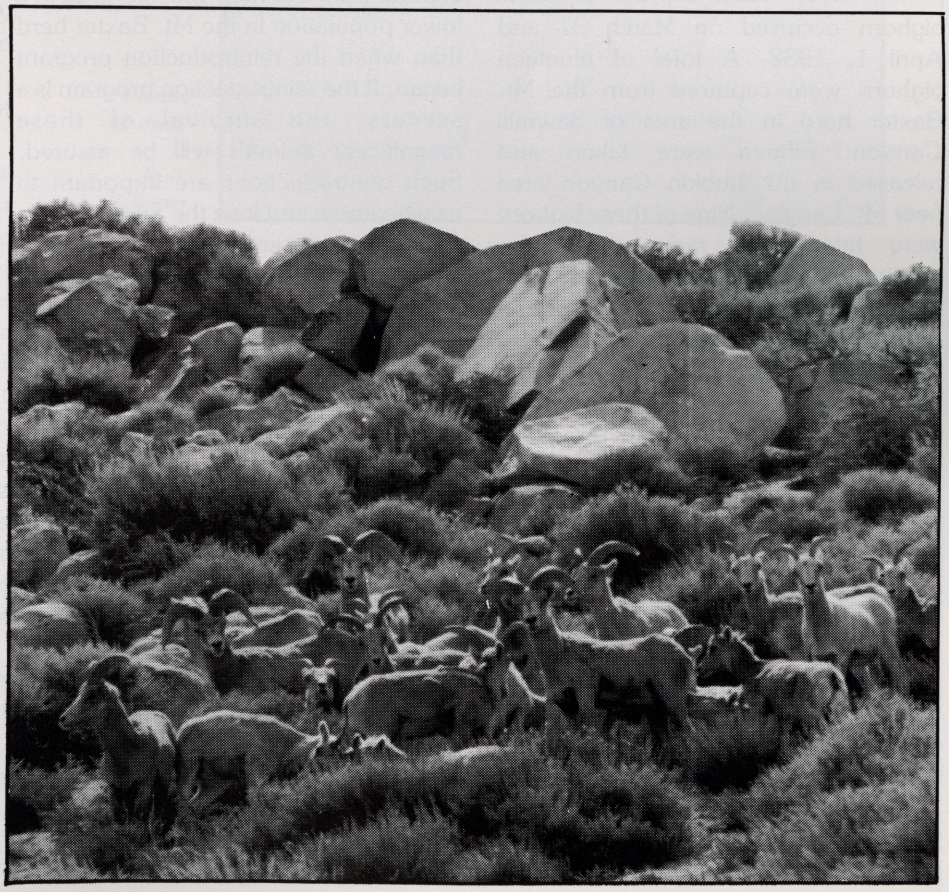
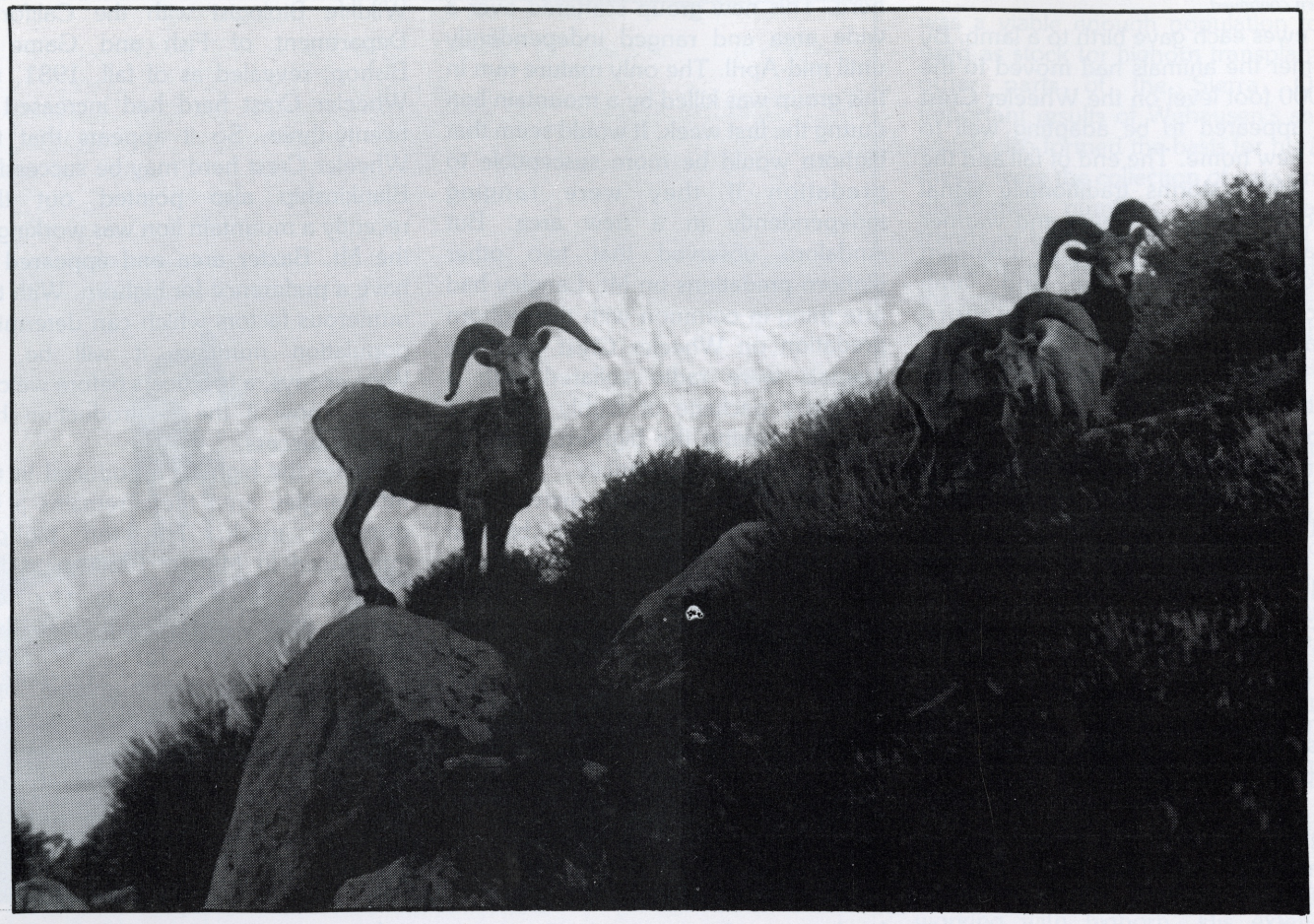




***Bighorn** continued*

The most recent capture of Sierra bighorn occurred on March 31 and April 1, 1982. A total of nineteen bighorn were captured from the Mt. Baxter herd in the area of Sawmill Canyon. Fifteen were taken and released in the Lubkin Canyon area near Mt. Langley. Nine of these bighorn were fitted with radio collars for monitoring. Four of the nineteen were released in the Wheeler Crest area and all were rams. These rams were also fitted with radio collars. Although the Mt. Langley herd's past has been doubtful, the additional fifteen bighorn introduced there makes things much more hopeful. Tom Blankinship, who has the responsibility of overseeing the welfare of bighorn in the Sierra, expressed optimism about the reintroduction of bighorn in the Sierra. He pointed out successful reintroductions which have occurred in Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Colorado, Montana, Utah and Washington.

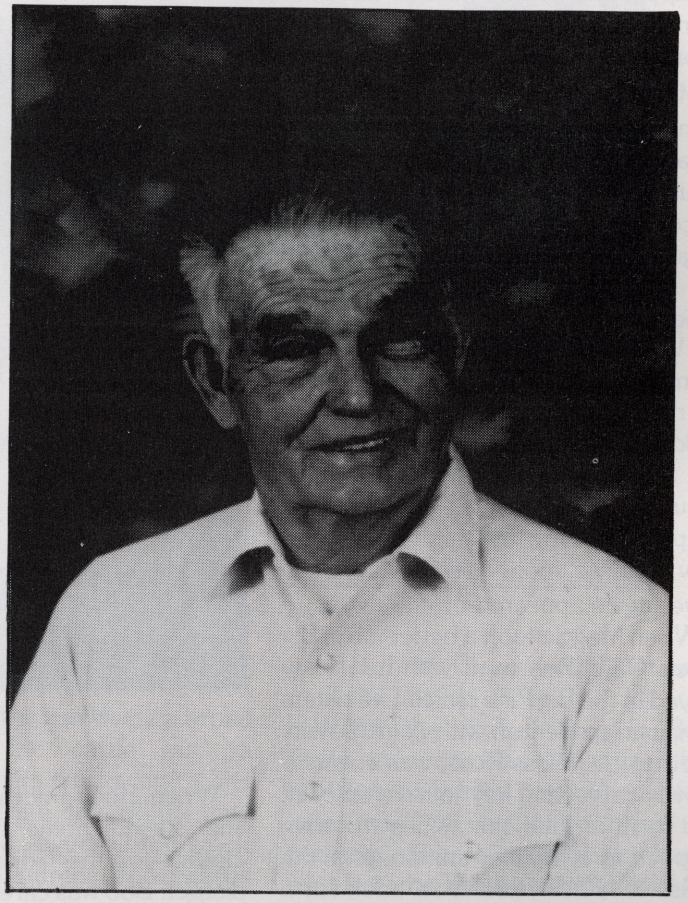
To date 59 bighorn have been taken from the Mt. Baxter herd. Since the Mt. Baxter herd has increased in number during the last few years the taking of 59 bighorn from this herd will not result in a lower population in the Mt. Baxter herd than when the reintroduction program began. If the reintroduction program is a success, the survival of these magnificent animals will be assured. Such reintroductions are important to us who know and love the Sierra. These reintroductions emphasize the need to solve the even bigger problem of bighorn decline throughout California. The decline of Sierra bighorn is part of a more general problem of bighorn decline in California. It is a statewide problem. Most bighorn populations in the mountainous regions of the California desert are on the decline. In particular, bighorn in Death Valley National Monument are experiencing a decline due to a number of factors such as competition with feral burros, decreasing water resources, and loss of habitat. If the decline of bighorn in California is to be stopped, and hopefully reversed, such programs as we have seen for the Sierra bighorn must continue. The survival of these majestic creatures, not only in the Sierra but throughout California, depends upon an informed and concerned public which is willing to support programs designed to safeguard bighorn numbers.

We all hope that the reintroduction of bighorn in the Sierra will prove successful. Most of us associate bighorn with the head-crashing bouts for which they are so well known. During the rutting season rams determine who will make off with a willing ewe, which has just come into heat, by engaging in head-crashing bouts which send them flying toward each other at speeds estimated between 50 and 70 miles per hour--impacting with forces up to 2400 pounds. The sound of their crashing horns, reverberating off canyon walls, is accompanied by a brief moment when heads seem to be welded together. If the reintroductions are successful and bighorn numbers increase, perhaps in the future it will not be a rare experience to sight the magnificent creature standing atop a rock pinnacle in his rugged mountain habitat. Some of us may even be lucky enough to witness the rutting of the rams. ■

REMEMBRANCES OF A YOUNG OLDTIMER

BOB PELLISSIER

by Ruth Pellissier



Photos courtesy of Ruth Pellissier

Compared to many Bishop seniors, Bob is a youngster. But Owens Valley has been his home for 68 years. His story begins with his grandparents in Mono County, 1860. William and Mary (Rice) Hamil came from Belfast, Ireland, with a brother Robert. They settled in the area of Old Benton, Hamil Valley and the Sparkplug Ranch. Little is known of Robert Hamil. William filed on land, built a ranch and raised a family. He was murdered at the turn of the century by land thieves. His wife died soon thereafter from the trauma, precipitating the premature birth of twins. The twins also died.

Those were rough times. Robber barons were real, not just something in the movies. The land thieves bound William Hamil, set him afire with kerosene, and slapped the mules, sending the wagon roaring down Yellowjacket Canyon. Hamil threw himself out and rolled in sagebrush. Towel, an Indian, cut him loose, and went for help from the Hamil ranch. The dying man had named his assailants, but they were never punished. The murderers accused Towel of perjury and sent him away.

The oldest son Jack, then a deputy in Mina, Nevada, was killed by an ex-con in the railroad station. That left Robert (a teenager), and three little girls: May, age 3; Theresa, 2; and Margaret (Maggie), born in 1849 and less than a year old. Robert learned to fend for himself. He lived a long and colorful life. The Indians raised the three girls. They spoke Paiute, English and French with equal fluency.

The only memory of the Hamil name is at Hamil Station, a patch of trees where The Slim Princess narrow-gauge engine took water. The family treasures transfer papers of that right-of-way from the Hamils to the Carson & Colorado Railroad, and the deed transfer of the home ranch "from William Hamil to Mary Hamil for her own and separate property for herself, her heirs and assigns forever, in consideration of the love and affection William bears toward his wife, Mary." Through trickery that land was also acquired by outsiders.

Maggie married Frank Pellissier (of Ancelle, France) in 1911. He was more than twice her age. Their children, Ellen, 1912; Dorothy, 1913, and Robert William Francis (Bob), 1915, were born at the Bertrand Ranch. When Bob was

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Pellissier *continued*

born, Maggie learned that Frank still had a wife, along with three grown daughters and a son, Frank Jr. Both the law and the Catholic Church declared Maggie's marriage invalid, but helped her dissolve the bonds of matrimony without argument. Frank was ordered to support his young children and buy their clothes. That order could never be enforced.

Maggie returned to Old Benton. Aunt Tessie, her husband Pete Miraberry, and Uncle Robert lived their entire lives there. Benton was a thriving place then. Traffic of stagecoaches, ore wagons, farm rigs and flivvers churned the streets. Bob remembers the fancy ladies and sleek gamblers alighting at the Waa Wera Hotel, but his most vivid memory is of the Chinese cook, where his mother worked. The cook gave the children an entire nickel for every stray cat they brought him. Someone thought to inquire where the cook kept his pet cats; soon thereafter there was a new Chinese cook. And Oriental Stew never again appeared on the menu.

When Maggie took a better job in Big Pine's Cafe, Bob went with her. They stayed in the Big Pine Hotel. The sisters remained in Benton with Aunt Tessie. Their uncle, Bloss Ross, was engineer on the railroad. They journeyed back and forth at little cost, since the train stopped at every way-station, or in the midst of NOWHERE if an adult (or a child) waved it down. The glamour and excitement of the railroad has never dimmed for Bob and his sisters. And the fun of growing up where everybody knew him is a fond memory. All adults looked after all children, it seemed to him. He was welcome up and down the Valley, at homes, businesses and ranches; he was well-mannered and always helpful. Maggie was very proud of him.

When Bob and Maggie moved to Bishop they lived over the store, where Ben Franklin's is now. Later, when the family expanded, they rented a house on South Street. Life moved slowly in those days, with few large changes. Bob loved all the businesses up and down Main Street — the Blacksmith Shop, Carpenter Shop, Coal and Wood Yard, Drug Store, Ice Cream Parlor, the Livery Stable. Even the Saloons had jolly sounds issuing forth. He often fetched his mother for the Constable to translate conversations at the jail with Indians who had indulged in "happy water." Bob sold fishworms at Mr. Smith's, the first garage in town. And he learned all he could about the newfangled machines.

Maggie and Bob (in center) with friends, near the Old Clark Hotel, Main and Church streets, Bishop.

When Bob's mother married again she stayed home and ironed frilly clothes for the ladies at the red-light district. Bob was carefully instructed to enter only at one certain door when he delivered the laundry. An older boy teased and asked if he knew what went on in that place. Little Bob felt his mother's money in his overall pocket, looked at the shiny dollar he'd received "just for himself," wiped the whipped cream off his mouth and answered, "You bet, I know! They make the best lemon pie in town."

When Bob lost a father for the second time, his sister Margaret was on the way. His mother could no longer work. At age eleven, Bob set out to support the family and do a man's job. He worked at the many dairies surrounding Bishop. In addition to regular chores with cows, he made sileage and stored it for winter feed. (Some of the cement silos are still standing.) He had been driving cars from the time he first saw one, and he'd learned to take them apart and remedy whatever ailed them. Once he took a job hauling highly volatile explosives up a maze of winding roads to a mine. Older, more cautious men would not risk such a job. But Bob had four other people to feed, and he worked at any job he could get. And he always managed to find work.

One of Bob's first jobs, in 1926 while he was eleven, was as a laborer helping build the Bishop High School. He

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Bob (at left) in Benton, 1920.

Fire Department entry, Homecoming Parade Main Street, Bishop, Labor Day Weekend 1955

***Pellissier** continued*

realized 22 cents an hour on that job and felt he was paid most handsomely — the same as the grown men.

Because everyone understood Bob's circumstances, and many families were going hungry, no one made a loud noise about child labor. Children generally labored at something in those days. They helped with harvests, cared for livestock, chopped wood, milked cows, separated milk, or whatever was needed for family life to run smoothly. The list of things children learned to do was endless. They were respected for their work — at home or for hire. Bob was willing to learn any job. He was paid as a carpenter, electrician, cowboy, harvester, fence-fixer, ditchdigger, mechanic, rabbit-raiser, canal-channeler, farmer, planter, mason, stove-and-refrigerator-fixer, house-mover, veterinarian, freight-and-ice-hauler, miner, gas-pumper, farm-implements-seller, storekeeper, fireman, laborer in an endless variety of jobs. You name it; he probably did it once, at least.

When snow crippled traffic in 1932, Bob helped his stepfather push through the drifts to feed the stock. No airplanes to drop hay in those days. They piled hay on a Caterpillar and made a broad trail to lead the cattle out to accessibility. When trucks and Cats could not penetrate the drifts, they went on foot and saved all the stock they could find. Hundreds of fine horses and cattle died in those snows. There was a lot of flooding also.

When Bob was a very small boy, a penny would buy a marvelous assortment of candies. Whenever he had a penny he would go to Bulpitt's Store. After choosing his purchases, he would inquire if he got change for the penny. Ruth Bulpitt or her twin sister would give him one more candy and a kiss. All that kissing business caused him to depart the premises fast.

Bob's stepfather had many animals. He was a packer, a wrangler and a sheepherder. Most kids had a horse or a burro to ride to school. Bob's burro was called Ginny and she was fueled by rock candy. One piece would take her many miles without balking. The rattle of the paper sack would sometimes urge her further, and the ride homeward was always free. Every time Bob went into a store for something good to eat, Ginny would not move until she got her share.

When the firebell rang in Bob's youth, everyone was a volunteer. Kids on bikes or burros or afoot rushed to help man the buckets or pull the hosecart. Bob admired Les Horton, who became Bishop's first official Fire Chief. Bob tagged his footsteps on firehouse duty until they made him a semi-official member of the Fire Department in 1930. In those years, everyone was "semi-official." But Bob has been a fully-trained fireman ever since. Years later, when his job took him to Rialto, he was a paid volunteer on a staffed Fire Department. He told them, "I'm a BISHOP Volunteer Fireman." He made it clear he would tarry there temporarily. But Owens Valley was his home, and where his heart is.

During the thirties, Bishop had a very small Police Department. A red light hung over Main Street at Line. If the light lit up, the patroling policeman ran to the nearest phone to ask what official business required his aid or presence.

During Prohibition, Bob was

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Valerie J. Naso photo

GOLDFIELD THE LAST FRONTIER

by Valerie J. Naso

Imagine a place in the most isolated part of the desert, a place that went from glory to near abandonment in a dozen years, a place that suffered fire, flood and snow--a place that to this day is the last frontier.

It was December of 1902 when two young prospectors set out from Tonopah to look for unexplored ground where they would have less competition than there was in the booming silver camp. When Harry Stimler and William Marsh headed south they had an old buckboard, a horse, a mule and enough provisions for a week or more. Did they have a tip from Harry's uncle Tom Fisherman, a man who wandered the area? No one knows for certain, but the spot where they camped 26 miles south was Rabbit Springs and what they found was gold float which they traced to a ledge near Columbia Mountain.

On December 4th the wind howled across the vast expanse of desert and the sand swirled in the bright cold air as they staked the first three claims; the Sandstorm, the Kruger and the May Queen. The last was a tribute to May, Harry's sister-in-law and to his wife Queen.

After staking as many claims as possible they named the entire area Grandpa, probably enjoying a little fun with a nonsense play on such names as Weepah, Hannapah and Tonopah. Pah is Shoshone for water, or spring.

The Tonopah Bonanza later reported with some excitement on the "marvelous and solid worth" of the ore. This sent a few men south to see what was happening, but the real rush wasn't until later. When the Sandstorm, the Combination and Jumbo showed promise by fall of 1903 there were about 50 people in Grandpa and it was time to organize the district.

A meeting was held on October 20, 1903 with a handful of claim owners perched atop a lumber pile on a corner of Crook Street. "Grandpa" got a dose of dignity and became Goldfield, as did the entire district. A town was called for and 11 men threw in $10 each for the initial survey. They called themselves The Goldfield Townsite Company and fellow member and surveyor Elmer J. Chute filed the plat.

The first ore from the Combination was shipped in November of 1903, tents were replaced by frame structures and by 1904 there were 350 people living on the sagebrush flat near Columbia Mountain. The population increased rapidly and buildings of cut stone replaced the wooden ones.

Lena Hammond lives in Tonopah but she remembers going to Goldfield with her family when she was about 15. "We went in on the stagecoach around 1907. It was alright but it was so crowded-- everybody was going to Goldfield. There were 20,000 people there."

The elevation of over 5,000 feet and the miles of desert covered only with

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sparse Joshua trees and sagebrush meant wood and water were two main problems. "It got cold there," Margaret Harlin says. "My mother had one of those old Home Comfort stoves and she used to put rocks in it after dinner. We each had our rock at the foot of the bed and we slept good all night. We had some wood but we kids used to go to the dump and get the old wedges from the mines and dry them out and burn them."

Water was a constant battle between numerous companies and street peddlers. "Mother bought her water by the barrel for $2.50," Margaret says. "They brought it in from over at The Malapais and whenever she needed water she put out the card just like you would for ice." She laughs. "They may have had ice but we never saw any."

There were nine children in her family, most of them born in Goldfield. Even though meat and grocery markets delivered everything, it required ingenuity to live on the desert. "Mother had an old trunk she kept in the yard and she covered it with dirt and put milk and butter in it. She had to learn to cope with so many things. We lived out at the mine at Jumbo a mile away and they built a boardwalk all the way to town for us to walk on. Some of it is still there."

Incongruities abounded in mining camps. "My dad never denied mother anything in the way of finery," Margaret says. "She had the most beautiful fur coat and a hat with ostrich plumes that cost $60. She had a fur coat and ostrich feathers and no running water."

In 1907 the Goldfield Consolidated Water Company piped water in from Magruder Mountain, a project initially planned in 1905 by the Montezuma Company. A much later report on the springs of the area by The Citizens' Advisory Water Committee could not have come from any state other than Nevada. It read in part, "The water of Slaughterhouse was piped to the cemetery and it was decided to keep it there."

Railroad service had come to Goldfield in 1905. With the coming of the Joe Gans-Battling Nelson fight on Labor Day of 1906, the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad provided side track to hold 300 Pullman cars. The town was jammed. In a fruitless effort to control the females in his flock, the Rev. James Byers of The First Presbyterian Church threatened to expel from his church any woman who attended the fight. It was rumored he would be run out of town if he pursued such folly.

Larry Labarthe grew up in Goldfield and he remembers his family sold their laundry in San Francisco just before the earthquake and came to Nevada. "They started the laundry in a tent and my mother used an eight-pound iron," he says.

"When that Nelson guy was training for the fight he used to run five miles up on The Malapais, then come down to the laundry. It was the only place in town that had a dry room and he'd sweat out," says Kelly Box, long-time resident.

The publicity generated by the 42-round fight that ended in a foul decision in favor of Gans was international; Goldfield was known everywhere and promoter Tex Rickard became equally famous. The arena was built in a gulley the desert has long since reclaimed, but Rickard's house still stands in excellent condition on the present Highway 95.

In 1906 and 1907 the mines produced $15 million in gold. The January 2, 1908 Goldfield Chronicle read, "New Nevada Richest of All in Minerals." There were 25 saloons to the block, five banks and several newspapers. However, highgrading, strikes and labor disputes resulted in threats of violence and in December of 1907 Governor Sparks brought in Federal troops to keep order. Easterners made snide remarks about the wild west, and Judge Goodwin of Goodwin's Weekly retorted, "If necessary Nevada will take care of herself." Nevertheless, soldiers remained camped on Combination Hill.

There was a sense of fun and adventure. "I was going to high school," Lena Hammond says. "The dry goods store was just like Livingston's in San Francisco. One day Max Meyer asked me if I'd like to go to work. By the time I got through crying my mother said, 'Go ahead, but I don't ever want to hear about education.' Those were the best principals I ever had." Lena was called Sassy then, and she remembers the light-hearted spirit of the times. "We were playing hide and seek and of course the cashier was always it. One of the girls was hiding in the bedding box and Mr. Meyer came in and said, 'Where's Miss Armstrong?' He had his elbow leaning right on the box all the time. She almost fainted under all that bedding."

There was elegance, too. "You just can't believe the class there. Everything was wealth, nothing was cheap," Margaret Harlin says. "You could go into the ice cream parlor with those stone walls and it was just like it was air-conditioned."

One of the most elegant places of all was the Goldfield Hotel, which held an informal opening on January 9, 1908. A number of people feasted in the dining room while listening to the strains of Prof. James Voss' orchestra. The hotel "has four stories and a basement. It holds about 200 rooms, two parlors and one of the finest cafes in the west," noted the Goldfield Chronicle. The tile floors, black leather chairs and brass beds impressed many a celebrity including Death Valley Scotty, who never missed a chance to stay there.

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Part of Goldfield's main section today. Photo by Valerie J. Naso

The hotel still stands like a beacon in the center of town. It was recently purchased by General Western Company, and Mike McKaig says they hope to restore it. "It would be the historic approach similar to The Mizpah," he says. They have already done the preliminary work including an architectural survey and "we hope it's going to happen."

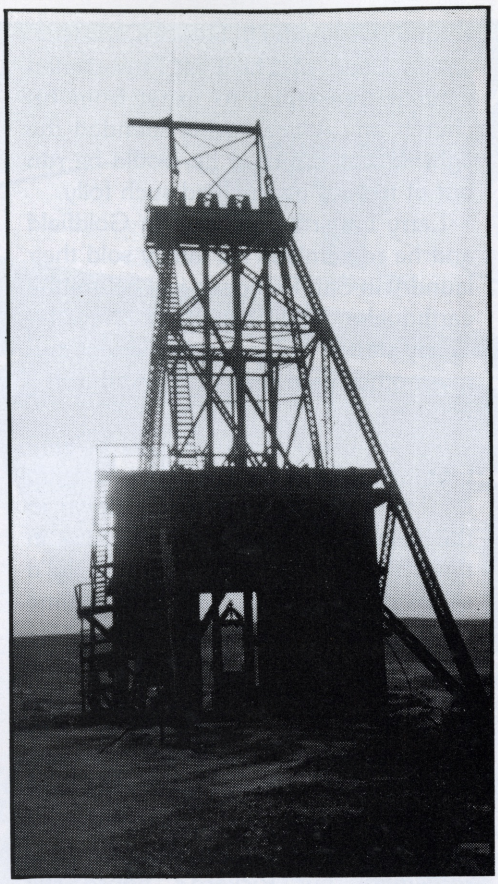
The 1907 Mizpah Hotel in Tonopah was beautifully and lovingly restored a few years ago by the Scott Corporation. Both hotels were designed by George Holesworth of Reno.

Most of Goldfield was declared an historic district on June 14, 1982. "It incorporates everything that's left," says James Hamrick of Historic Preservation and Archeology in Carson City. This is a major step and means places like the Goldfield Hotel will be preserved.

Great excitement was generated when the American Thomas Flyer came through town during the New York to Paris auto race in March of 1908. The uncertainty of when it might arrive sent at least one false escort all the way to Tonopah and back, but when George Schuster finally arrived to cheers and the blowing of mine whistles, the crowd honored him and he was taken-- where else-- to luncheon at the Goldfield Hotel before departing for Rhyolite and eventual victory in Paris.

Flamboyance was in direct proportion to the production of the mines. The Florence was perhaps the greatest. Martin Duffy was a Nevada State Senator but his life was tied to the Florence. "He came here when he was just four years old with his mother and dad," Ruth Duffy says. "They lived in a tent at the foot of Columbia Mountain and he grew up on the streets of Goldfield. I guess it was a pretty wild place then. He started leasing on the Florence when he was 19 and he worked it until he was able to buy it in 1950. He was crazy about that mine."

The Duffys lived on the sharp curve of Highway 95 where there used to be an old patrol car with a dummy at the wheel. Ruth was always afraid a car would run into the house and one day it did. "When Martin came home he took a look at the good side and said, 'Hell, it looks alright to me.' But then he got around to the front and realized the car was still sticking half out of the house and it was in pretty sad shape." So they moved the entire house up to the Florence and put it back together.



One of the many headframes at Goldfield. Photo by Valerie J. Naso

Ruth was a part of the mine. "My husband taught me to run the hoist-- the shaft is 1260 feet deep-- and I was running the hoist and letting him down every day. The original engine room was built in 1904. It's really exciting to know you have control of a man riding in the cage on the other end of the cable." Ruth is a small energetic woman and it isn't hard to picture her sitting in the now-dusty chair at the controls. She estimates the Florence produced over $9 million.

The peak was 1908, but the dream of riches went on until the elements took over. On September 13, 1913 the biggest gullybuster in Nevada history hit Goldfield. "A big dark cloud came in and when it hit town it kind of divided into two rivers, one on the east side and one on the west and it just washed the houses away," Ruth says. "Mrs. DeGarmo was on the roof of her house and she was washed away and drowned."

Louis Serventi had been living in Goldfield for several years. "The water was like a mountain. In ten minutes it was ten feet tall. The houses were floating." Louis waves his hands up and down. "The only way to save anything was to open both doors and let the water go through. There was a bearded lady who ran Murph's Saloon. This fellow came to save her and she was screaming, 'No, no, my bottles will be washed away.' 'Better your bottles than you,' he told her and he pulled her out.'"

Nevadans never give up. Goldfield wiped up the mud-- some no doubt panned it-- and five years later total production was past $83 million. But the boom was gone. "We moved away in 1916 when it started going down," Margaret Harlin says. So did a lot of people, and by 1923 there were only 1558 residents.

On July 7, 1923 most of the town burned down. A fire, probably in a still, started at Tom Rea's place. "Wild Bill," a Swede from Death Valley was the first to shout fire, possibly too late. "Fire Wipes Out Goldfield Business Section - Flames Eat Big Buildings for 5 Hours," read the Goldfield Tribune. The fire engine itself caught fire and was seen going down Crook Street at noon with the running board in flames.

"When it started, the wind was blowing a gale and it swept up one side and down the other. People had stacked up their things on one side and when the wind changed and blew down the other side they lost everything. They didn't even have any water pressure to reach the second story," Ruth Duffy remembers.

The final backlash of fate was the winter of 1932-33. "I shoveled enough snow, six feet, and the next day it was just the same. The chief said, 'Oh to hell with it, we're not going anywhere anyway.'" So says Alex, a former fireman.

The people who stayed and even those who left still loved their town. Goldfield never became a ghost; it remained the last frontier. After a while people began to discover it again.

It looks quiet on the surface, but those who tarry a while will find plenty going on. Like the Santa Fe Saloon on a good night. It was built in 1907 and seems to have changed little since. It is

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so far east of the highway it requires a bit of looking-for. The board floor is so gray with age it has no real color and scarcely any shape. Walt and Diane Burling own the bar and when she comes in about five the whole bar shouts, "Hi Diane!"

Locals like Lydia and Jim Bridgeman come here. "I grew up here," Lydia says. "We were the last class to graduate from the old school. The interior is a wreck now." Today she teaches three grades in the new school across the street, has a total of 25 children and loves it. "I'd never do anything else."

Lydia gestures toward Walt and Diane. "They go out and help clean up the cemetery, cook hamburgers for the kids for the Fourth of July-- everything. They're super supportive of the community. Besides that, it has to be the most friendly bar in the west."

The dust flies from the floor and the building shakes, but the foot stompers go at it to *Dixie, Oh Susannah* and other oldies that Lynn Baighley plays on the piano. Drinks are mostly beer, songs frequently patriotic. But everyone sings and they know all the words. Monday through Friday there's a family style dinner served "promptly at 7:30pm" for $4.50 a plate and the food is excellent. "Eat, drink and be merry, for today you're in Goldfield," is not just a toast, it is the truth.

On August first, the Santa Fe was the scene of an unusual event: a double wedding. Plenty of beer, champagne and homemade food was provided when artist Susie Scott and Santa Fe bartender Pete Ramsey tied the knot along with Susie's mother and her new husband.

Susie and Pete also run the Snake Museum and Craft Shop next door to the Santa Fe. They have live snakes and reptile accessories. If you're wondering where the skins come from, ask Susie what became of Thor when he ate the neighbor's dog! Their work is good and they took second and third ribbons at the Jim Butler Days craft show in Tonopah.

Down the street at the Mozart Club it is just as lively. Sometimes Lynn comes in to play piano, other evenings Amos Carpenter plays the fiddle. "He won the Nevada State Fiddlin' Championship," Milt Socher says. "He hadn't played for a while and I didn't think he'd make it, but he did." Milt has a long beard and looks as if he'd been in Goldfield all his life, but he's a new pioneer of three years.

A sign behind the bar indicates concern for local issues. "We are trying to get a group together to clean up the cemetery. It sure needs it bad..." It was put up by Kelly Box and you'll find him behind the bar along with Bill Schultz who is running for Justice of the Peace. "Me and Poor Richard are the only two volunteers. We had a guy with a tractor who came out one Saturday but he never came back. We need all the help we can get," Kelly says.

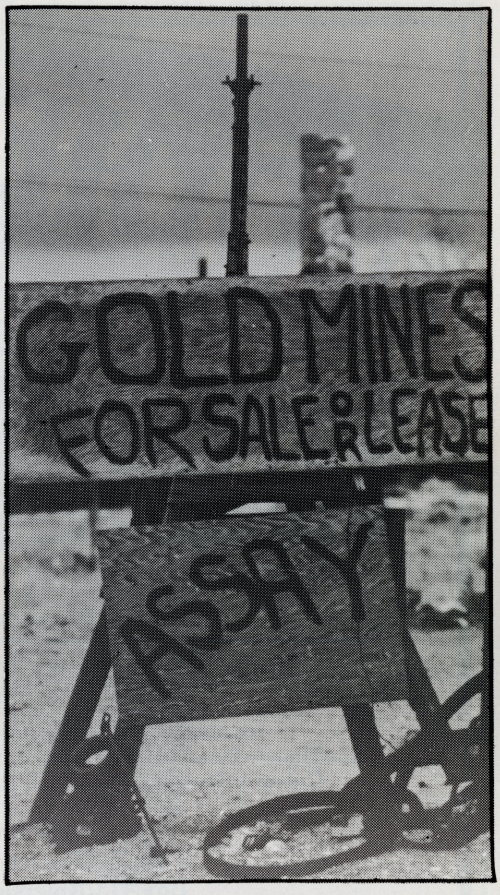
The unlikely sounding Goldfield Civic Improvement Association has hopes of building a tennis court, swimming pool, playground, picnic area and baseball field. "You can't tell about small towns. It would be nice for the kids-- all it takes is a little push," says 20-year resident Jane Carlson.

At The Gables at the south end of town, a bar and soon to be gourmet restaurant, the entire town of Goldfield is being reconstructed in miniature as it looked in 1907. The work is being done by Arthur Chenney, who is 85 and the father of owner Bruce Chenney. "He's working on the railroad station now. When he's done the trains will all run," Bruce says. Arthur has always been a model builder.

"He started building working ship models years ago. He has one at Annapolis, one in New York and two in Boston. Then he got into HO railroads. He dropped down to N scale for this project."

Everything looks real, including the gray cupola of the Nevada Hotel that was torn down before it ever opened for business. "He uses sheets of plastic for the windows and then he paints everything. He even has stained glass windows in the church and the Rickard house." The streets are peopled with tiny men and women and horse-drawn wagons. "Right on the back of the ice wagon is a pair of ice tongs. He made one pair and lost them in the rug-- looked for them for thirty minutes before he made this pair."

Arthur works from old photographs. One day while working on the Goldfield Hotel, he came out with a grin on his face and said, "Do you realize that in 1907 the fire escapes weren't finished?" He left it as is and the hotel is still under construction.



Goldfield continues to talk gold.
Photo by Valerie J. Naso

When completed the town will be displayed in its own glassed room. The Gables is a perfect place for such an exhibit; the house was built around 1905 by newspaperman Charles S. Sprague. Meanwhile, work in progess can be seen around the bar.

There are new places like the Roaring Camp in the old drug store building, where I was greeted by Paul Sanger. "I'll bet you like fried chicken smothered in pork chops." He likes to discuss who invented algebra, calculus, the Pyramids. All you have to do is listen, you'll enjoy it if he's there.

Around Nevada there is still talk of the MX missile and what it would mean if it came in. Jim Bullock runs the school and is friends with Nevada historian Stanley Paher. "Old Stan and I flew to Omaha and they brought in 22 Generals-- showed us everything. I think there's still a definite possibility; Reagan's just keeping it on the back burner." But he's not anxious for it to

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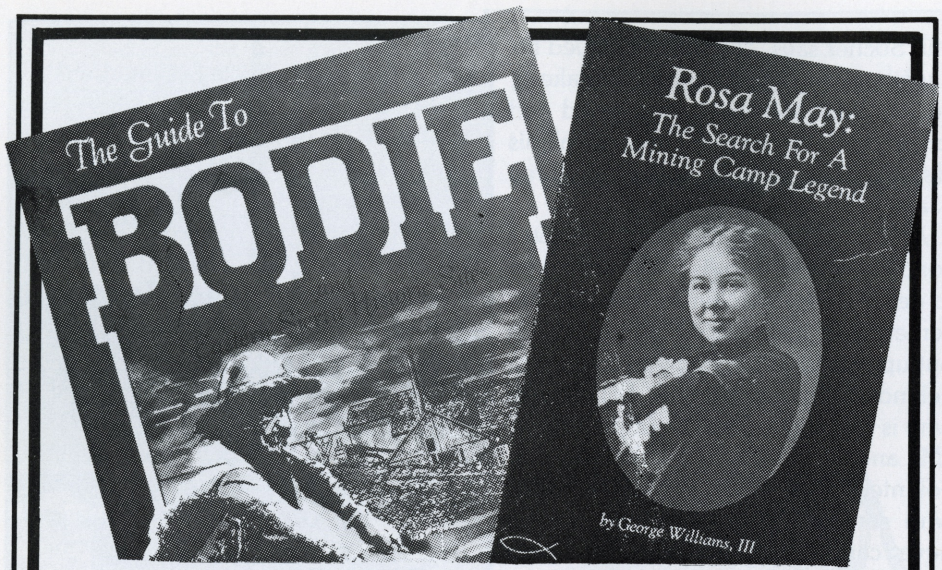

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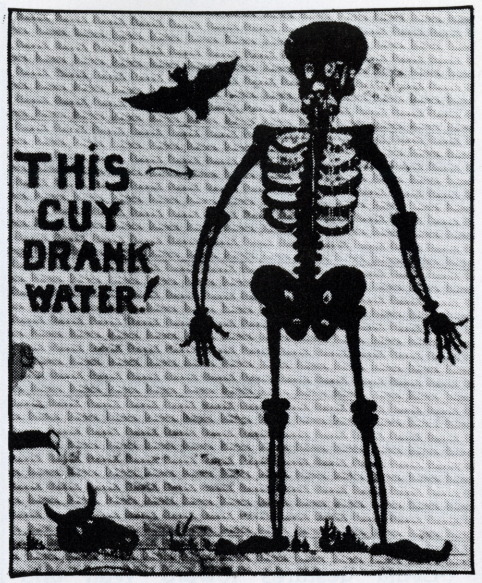

Artwork on wall of the Mozart Club. Photo by Valerie J. Naso

happen. "We don't have the facilities to educate 500 children the first year and that's what it would mean," he says. However, James Hamrick of Historic Preservation and Archeology agrees that it is definitely possible the missile will still come to Nevada. "I don't think there's anyone in this office who doesn't feel that way," he says.

Mining is still fundamental in Goldfield. Geologist Tom Ballard has been working in the area for several months. As he puts it, "We've got to have domestic production of metals in order for this country to survive."

The 1908 Paris race wasn't the only one to come to Goldfield. The Coors-Frontier 500 off-road race from Las Vegas to Virginia City will come through town next October, and crowds will be waiting just as they did all those years ago.

So the buildings cluster together; the stone Court House, the old school, the fire department, the hotel and the Deep Mines building are punctuated by wood so sandblasted it matches the desert. The wind blows, a porch sags, wild yellow roses bloom. But spirited people keep the town alive and there is hope of good things to come.

Goldfield. The last frontier. Buff Webster, a close friend of Charlotte and Kelly Box writes, "It was as if upon the closing of the door, you stepped into yesterday and all of the very best it stood for. A fortress frail and persevering."

This is Goldfield, where the old west is still very much alive. ■

Doctor Nellie

***Doctor Nellie* is the autobiography of Owens Valley's beloved doctor who practiced medicine in Bishop from 1895 to 1917. By special arrangement with the publisher, Genny Smith Books, SIERRA LIFE presents a series of excerpts from *Doctor Nellie*. The book describes vividly and in detail pioneer life in Inyo and Mono Counties.**

***Doctor Nellie* is the true story of Nellie MacKnight, whose father abruptly leaves his family in upstate New York and heads for the Far West, obsessed with dreams of making his fortune in the gold mines of Bodie.**

Dr. Helen MacKnight Doyle, the beloved Dr. Nellie, taken in 1899.

Photo courtesy of Dorothy Cook

Christmas Day, 1878. Petrolia, Pennsylvania.

Not until the meal was served did I begin to realize that there was something unusual pending — something that made Papa look flushed and eager and somehow different, and seemed to take Mama's appetite, so that the much anticipated and deliciously realized roasted goose (Papa always insisted on roast goose for Christmas) remained on her plate scarcely touched. Uncle Silas and Papa were talking so intently that they scarcely seemed to know what they were eating.

"You see," Papa was saying to Uncle Silas, "the trouble with this country is that it's all finished. I can always make a bare living here, but everything is surveyed and what chance has a surveyor in a country that is already laid out and finished? Think of the opportunities in California, not only in my own line of work but, through the work, being able to get in on the ground floor on good mining properties! Why, they're making millionaires out there overnight!"

"Gad, Smith, you're right." Uncle Silas had caught Papa's enthusiasm. "Tell you what I'll do. I'll stake you to the train fare out there. If I were a young man, I'd go with you. It's too good an opportunity for a young man to let pass."

Mama's hand shook, so that when she started to pour the coffee she spilled it on the tablecloth. She got up and went to the kitchen, as though in a hurry, and when she came back there were spots of red on her cheeks and her eyes looked as though she were going to cry.

"But, Smith," she said, breaking into the midst of their enthusiasm, "what about Nellie and me?" Even to my childish comprehension, Papa seemed suddenly different. I, who had always felt myself first in his affection, sensed a strange feeling of separation, a being set aside for awhile.

"I have thought it all out, Olive," Papa was saying to Mama; "we will sell the house and furniture, and you and Nellie can go and live with my folks until I send for you or come back."

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Grandmother's Farm in Madrid, New York, 1879.

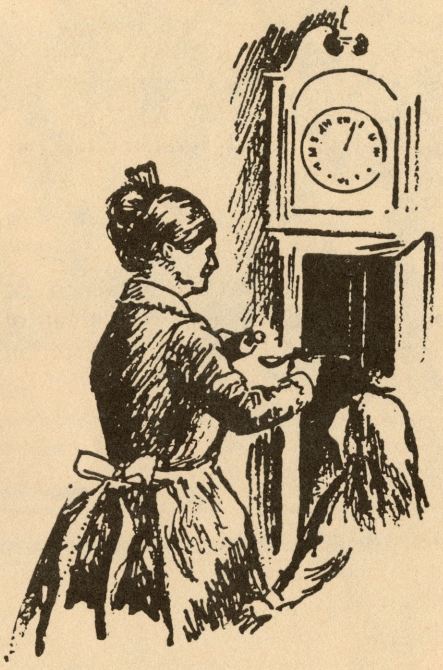
Grandmother MacKnight—there was a woman! Through mists of fifty years I see her as plainly now as I did that day: stocky in build, rugged, rosy, with the most comfortable lap, the most cheerful smile, the softest skin. I used to love to stroke her face, pink and ivory white. Her only cosmetics were a dash of cold water at the kitchen sink in the morning and an occasional application of mutton tallow when her skin was chapped. Her hair was white and soft and smooth, parted in the middle and combed plainly back. Often, when she was tired or hot, she would dip her hands in cold water and smooth back her hair.

Just as Ogdensburg seemed to me to be the hub of the universe, Grandmother's kitchen was the heart and soul of the home. It was a large room, probably twenty by thirty feet. I don't remember the walls, but the floor was painted with yellow ochre, which was frequently renewed, so that the surface was always shining and seemed to lend a warmth and glow to everything. There were two large windows that looked into the front yard; double ones they were in the winter, the extra windows put on for protection from the cold and never opened until they were taken off in the spring.

Outside, the house was banked with manure, up to the sills, and this bank was drifted over with snow. Manure was supposed to have especial qualities of warmth. There was a large cook stove with mica windows in its front door, through which the fire glowed cheerily. There was a long table, covered with a checked cloth, and a wooden sink, and a pump which connected with a cistern underneath the house. This cistern was filled by the rain and snow water that collected on the roof and in the eaves, and the water was used for all domestic purposes except drinking. The tragedies that lay in those cisterns!

Off from the kitchen was the buttery, with a moulding board underneath a back window that looked into a frozen garden. There were shelves for dishes and food. Pans of milk stood here, the thick cream folding back in layers when Grandmother used the skimmer. There was everything in this buttery from saltpeter to drench the horses, and medicines concocted from rock candy and whiskey, to butter and homemade cheese, pumpkin pie and mince meat.

There was only one medicine that was kept in another place. In the grandfather's clock that stood between the kitchen windows, Grandmother kept a bottle of what was known as picry. This was especially for me. It was



a dark brown, vile-looking and bitter-tasting medicine, and, oh how I dreaded to see Grandmother go to the clock and take down the bottle and hunt a spoon. I should be very glad if I could find out what used to go into that mixture. That, with sulphur and molasses as a spring medicine, constituted the pharmacopoeia of my childish rememberings.

Nine o'clock meant bed-time. Grandmother would go to the clock and change the weights, so that they were ready to start out again on their twenty-four-hour journey. The men went upstairs to bed. Mama and I undressed by the kitchen fire and scampered to our "other room" bedroom, each carrying a candle, and a hot brick wrapped in flannel to put between the handwoven woollen sheets that Grandmother had made.

In the morning the men would start the kitchen fire and then go to the barn to do the chores. We would hear Uncle Gordon priming the pump to draw our supply of drinking water for the day. Mama and I would grab our clothes and make for the kitchen and the friendly blaze. No one who has not had the experience of jumping out of bed into a zero temperature and grabbing cold clothes to run and dress by the fire can possibly appreciate the luxury of a modern furnace-heated house.

Grandmother was always up and stirring before we were, getting breakfast started. My first thought was for the beautiful pictures that Jack Frost had painted on the windows overnight; parks and palaces, snow stars and fairies, finer than any picture books. They were the only picture books I had. The next thought, stimulated by the odor of warming potatoes and fried salt pork, was for breakfast. Of all the food I remember, fried salt pork and thick milk gravy seems to have been the backbone of every day's menu! Such good salt pork, sweet and nutty tasting, with milk gravy.

Mornings were always busy. Perhaps there was yeast to make from the "starter" that was never allowed to run out, or maybe it would be salt-rising bread made from emptyings started with meal and milk and sugar, kept warm and allowed to ferment and form a self-made yeast. Such wholesome, delicious bread, but giving off an odor during the making that was worse than over-ripe Camembert. Bread reminds me of butter and churning. In the winter this took practically all day. There was not so much cream as in the summer, so the tall stone crock, with the dasher, was used. The cream was brought from the buttery, icy cold, and poured into the churn. Then the churn was set in a tub of warm water to take the chill off, but not to get really warm—delicately tested with a finger for thermometer. Grandmother would give the dasher a few pumps and whisk it around to see if it was starting all right, and then it would be my turn to churn. It was a tiresome job, but stimulated in interest by Grandmother's occasionally lifting the cover, looking critically into the churn,

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and saying, "It's getting really thick. I think it's beginning to come," and I would churn merrily on again until finally a thick layer would form between the dasher and the hole in the cover, and then, just when it seemed that my short, fat arms couldn't raise that dasher another time, the cream would separate, leaving only a thin liquid and chunks of butter to cling to the dasher. The buttermilk was strained off and fed to the hogs, for the cream stood so long in the winter that the buttermilk was bitter.

Grandmother would put the butter in a shallow, wooden bowl, cover it with cold water, and work it with a wooden ladle until it was hard and smooth and free from buttermilk. In the winter it had to be colored with a few drops of Richardson's butter color. Then the butter was moulded into rolls the size and shape of a jelly roll.

In spring the whole process was very different. The cows "came in." There were little calves in the barn, and there was a quantity of milk. Then the big barrel churn, mounted on a standard, was used. The cream was poured into a bung-hole in the side of the barrel, and Uncle Gordon would turn the barrel by a big handle, much as he turned the grindstone to sharpen the scythe later in the season. Now the buttermilk was good to drink, nothing better, and no color was added to the butter, for it was a rich, golden yellow.

Then came spring. I always feel sorry for children who have had no experience of winter, with its snow and ice, followed by the thrill of spring. I never remember realizing beauty in nature until that first spring on Grandmother's farm, and then my heart fairly burst with the joy of discovery. From the gate in the picket fence along the drive that ran to the back of the house, Grandmother had beds of spring flowering bulbs, narcissus, daffodils, and tulips pushing their shoots valiantly up through the frozen ground.

In the front yard were large sugar-maple trees, four on each side of the path that ran to the front gate. It was fascinating to watch their buds swell and then burst into lace-like leaves. Beyond the driveway the orchard ran down a sunny slope to the river and apple and pear blossoms added their dainty loveliness to the spring festival. On either side of the front path Grandmother's peonies, in two round beds, uncurled their fern-like leaves to the sun, and in the back garden under the buttery window moss-roses began to leaf out.

There were little calves and colts coming at the barn and being turned out in the newly green pasture when the sun was warm. Baby chickens, like so many fluffy balls, were arriving, and I always had a chosen few in a little box, swathed in flannel behind the kitchen stove. There were little pigs to snuggle against their big, fat mother's teats in the hog pen.

When spring was running every place on tip-toe, came the rare treat of "sugaring off." Mama, Uncle Gordon and I, with a big basket of lunch, went in the buggy, picking up a girl cousin of mine on the way. I was later to learn that most of the people for miles around were aunts, uncles, and cousins. Uncle Alex was to go in the light wagon for his "girl" and some other young people. When that arrangement was made, I saw the first shadow on Grandmother's face. She was staying home to superintend a hired man who came to do the chores. But Grandmother's evident displeasure did not dampen my zest for the lark on which we were setting forth.

We travelled the slushy road and over the bridge that spanned the Grass River, where the ice was breaking up, and then, in and out, among the trees of the sugar bush, to the sugar house—a wooden, two-room shanty. The trees had been tapped the day before and the buckets that hung from spouts in their sides were full of sap. Uncle Gordon collected the sap and poured it into the huge kettle that stood on a stout iron stove. Then he started a roaring fire and the sap began to boil. Mama, my cousin and I roamed through the woods, finding May-apple blossoms and violets—quiet, shy flowers that clutched your throat with their beauty. When we came back to the sugar house, a delicate odor of maple was in the air. Uncle Alex came with his girl and the other young people. I thought Uncle Alex's girl very pretty. She was tall and slender and dressed more stylishly than any one of my acquaintance. She made me think of Ogdensburg.

We had such fun testing the syrup, and then, as it grew thick, going to shady spots, where snow banks still lingered, for milk pans full of glistening snow on which the thick syrup was poured to make maple wax. If there is any more delicious confection in the world, I have not discovered it.

As spring opened, letters began to come from Papa. The mails were so uncertain through the snowy winter that at first there were three or four at a time. The first letter was excitingly post-marked, Reno, Nevada.

"It has been a long, tiresome trip," he wrote. "Sometimes the train was stalled for hours, waiting for the snow plows to come and clear the tracks for us. This is a small town, only important because it is here that one changes from the main line to the Virginia and Truckee wood-burning train that runs to Virginia City and to Mound House, where I transfer for Bodie."

There was a later letter postmarked, "Bodie," California. "I came to Mound House on the Virginia and Truckee," it read, "through Carson City, the capitol of Nevada. At Mound House I transferred to a queer, little narrow gauge train that runs to Hawthorne, and on through the desert to Owen's Lake. The good Lord only knows why it was built. As a man on the train said, 'This road was built three hundred miles too long, and three hundred years too soon.' I wish you and Nellie could see the coach that brought us to Bodie. It is a four-horse Concord stage. A shot-gun messenger, with a sawed-off shot-gun, sits up on the high seat in front with the driver. He has the Wells Fargo Express box between his feet. Going out, it is full of gold bullion; coming in, it is full of gold coin. The side rails of the stage turn up at each end like skates. The body of the coach swings between them on wide leather straps. They are

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very comfortable, and it was a beautiful drive over the foothills to the Mountain House, where we arrived at nine o'clock at night, had supper, and changed horses. All winter long the horses wear snow-shoes. They are about the size of dinner plates and clamp onto the horses' hoofs. At two o'clock in the morning we arrived in Bodie. The streets were all lighted, stores open, saloons and gambling houses filled with people. Big quartz mills were running at each end of town, men by hundreds coming off shift every eight hours. The hotel was so full I could not get a room, and was given a candle and taken to a cabin down the street."

Mama dies, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1882.

The casket was opened and the preacher did not preach a sermon, but only said a prayer for those who take themselves out of this world by violence before the Lord sees fit to take them at their allotted time. Then I knew that he thought Mama had been wicked in the face of God to take *Laudanum* and never wake up. And I wondered whether he would have thought that the Lord would forgive her, if he had known about the bone felon and how her head had pulled and hurt. But I did not get a chance to say anything to him about it.

Mama was buried in the burying ground on the hill. Her grave was by those of my brother and sister who had died and been buried there before Papa and Mama moved to Petrolia. The red and gold maple leaves fluttered softly down, making a patch-work quilt over her grave. What the preacher had said did not trouble me. I felt sure God understood how tired Mama had been and that when she rested He would let her walk in the streets of gold. I felt glad that even though Papa had not been able to find gold in California, Mama could have it all around her now.

Journey on the narrow-gauge Carson & Colorado Railroad and arrival in Bishop, 1887.

The conductor had told Papa where he could find me. He came to me. Perhaps he, too, was disappointed. He might have hoped that I would look more like Mama. He took me in his arms. He cried a little and trembled with emotion. It was like a scene from a stage play.

Below Mount Tom, Owens Valley, *watercolor by Nina Kelley. Commissioned for the cover of the new book DOCTOR NELLIE Courtesy of Genny Smith*

Fellow travelers had heard the story: that I had come alone across the continent to meet my father, whom I had not seen since I was a baby. They crowded around. Papa kept repeating, "I wouldn't have known her. She's grown so!" As though he didn't realize all the years that had passed and all that I had been through. I don't think he ever did realize. He seemed to resent the fact that Uncle John and Aunt Mary had brought me to Dakota with them. He felt that I should have been made to stay on the farm until he sent for me. We talked about it very little. He seldom mentioned Mama. It was hard for me to feel that he had ever belonged to her. He seemed to be very proud of me and glad to have people know I was his daughter, just as he might have been proud of a fine animal or a valuable piece of property.

We arrived in Reno. The thing that impressed me most, as I walked around the town with my father, was the purple blossoming alfalfa that grew along the footpaths and in most of the gardens. Small wonder, after the burned-over prairie and the long trip across the desert, that a plant so green and sturdy as alfalfa should attract my attention. I learned that Reno was another hub. Here men came to take the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to the famous Comstock Lode of Virginia City. Here millions of dollars in bullion were transferred from the Virginia and Truckee to the main line, on its way to the San Francisco mint. Reno was the only outlet for all the mining and cattle country along the eastern slope of the Sierras. Here we left the main line to travel south over the Virginia and Truckee and the Carson and Colorado to Owen's Valley, our future home.

The Sierras! How they towered in magnificent grandeur, dwarfing anything I had ever known, crashing in splendor on my eyes, accustomed to

continued on next page ...

the far horizons of the prairie.

When our train drew into the station at Carson City, we seemed to have plunged into the midst of some exciting social event. High-stepping horses drew fine carriages; women in fashionable clothes and well-groomed men in frock coats and silk hats exchanged greetings. What was the occasion? They were there to see the train come in! It meant contact with the world on the other side of the mountain.

At Mound House the Virginia and Truckee road swung east on its way to Virginia City. We changed there to the cramped cars of the narrow-gauge Carson and Colorado. When we arrived at the desert town of Sodaville, the train stopped to stay all night. So did we. We went to bed in the rough "Hotel and Bar." Between the oath-punctured discussions of the gambling games that were in full swing in the bar room and the yelping of the coyotes across the desert, sleep was banished. I lay awake, trying to understand this strangeness that rose like a wall between me and that Papa who had left his little family in Petrolia so many years ago.

The narrow-gauge train, apparently much refreshed by its overnight stop, started across the desert the next morning with great puffing and snorting and exhibition of renewed energy. My troubled wonderings of the night before were almost forgotten in my interest in this strangely different country. The people, too, had changed. Men wore flannel shirts and their trousers were tucked into high boots. Some of them walked behind queer little mules that my father said were burros. The wooden saddles that the burros had on their backs were pack saddles. The stout hide bags that hung on each side of the pack saddles were kyaxes. Mining supplies and food, which my father called grub, were packed in the kyaxes. The men were prospectors. They were going out to work some claim. Desert rats, my father called them. If they found "pay dirt," they were able to outfit themselves; if not, they found somebody to grub-stake them. They lived and died on the desert.

Other men drove freight wagons loaded with ore or the soda and borax that was a valuable product of the country. The driver sat in a saddle on the wheel-horse. From there he drove the long string of mules, made up of from twenty to thirty animals. There were leaders and pointers and swing teams, held together by chains and stretchers. There were no reins. A jerk line ran to the leader. When a mule refused to perform the functions that he knew were expected of him, the driver jumped from his saddle to the ground, ran along the string of mules to the

offending animal and belabored it with a short whip and a volley of oaths that made it lean into the collar. My father said the men who drove these teams were mule-skinners, and that when the mornings were cold and they knew the mules would hate to pull the load they would give each mule a beating before the team was hitched up just so they would start the day right.

The men's clothes were white with alkali dust. The car was filled with it. The sky was clear and blue. Clearer and bluer than any sky I had ever seen. The desert was covered with brush that my father said was sage-brush and grease-wood and rabbit-brush. To the west the sharp peaks of the Sierras were etched against the sky; to the east was the White Mountain range, its canyons filled with purple shadows.

We came to the monument that marked the boundary between Nevada and California. I looked firmly out of the car window while stinging tears came to my eyes. This gray, lonely desert, with the ugly red stations along the track, was California.

My father explained that we were in Mono County, the county made famous by the great mining towns of Bodie and Aurora. He told of the old stagecoach days; how people traveled over the stage roads that ran from Sonora through a pass in the Sierras to those booming camps. Those were the days of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the days of a wide-open mining camp when it was a mark of distinction to be a "bad man from Bodie."

Then we crossed the boundary line into Inyo County, christened by the Indians from the mountain range to the east, Inyo, the abiding place of a great spirit.

The train stopped and we got out at one of the ugly red stations. A light wagon with a fringed canopy top, drawn by a four-horse team, waited for us. The days of the stagecoach were past. We drove toward the Sierras. The sand crunched under the wheels.

Not far from the station we saw a circular stone wall, which my father called a stone corral. He said that was where Owensville, the first town in the valley, had been, and told how the settlers got together and had their first dance there in an adobe cabin only ten by twelve feet in size. When the Fourth of July came they had a celebration. There were a hundred and fifty men and seven women. The women sang and played a melodeon. There were many Southerners, but everyone was friendly, in spite of the Civil War that was going on "back home."

We crossed Owen's River on a plank bridge and climbed a ridge of sand. I saw strange huts that looked like large bowls, turned upside down. My father explained that they were Indian houses, and he called the small village a campoodie.

We reached the top of the ridge. Before us lay the Owen's River valley. As though by a miracle the desert had disappeared. My father explained that it was a miracle, the miracle wrought by irrigation. I remembered how we waited and longed and prayed for rain in Dakota. The mountains, I was told, garnered the snow and gave an unfailing water supply to the valley that stretched for over a hundred miles along their base.

We drove past cultivated fields, friendly, smiling fields of alfalfa and corn and shocked grain, to the town of Bishop, which was one of the many settlements that lay nestled in the valley.

We stopped at the Valley View Hotel

and Bar. There was a harvest festival in progress and the main street on which it faced was crowded with people. They spoke a language that was strange to me. I found that farms were no longer farms but ranches; farmers were ranchers; the sod shanties of the prairies were replaced by the adobe houses of the settlers in California; unbroken horses were broncos and a barnyard was a corral; the coyot of Dakota was the coyote here. Cowboys were buckaroos and swaggered along the streets dressed in chaps and sombreros. Twenty-five cents was two bits. Pennies were unknown. There was no paper money. Five, ten and twenty-dollar gold pieces jingled in purses and pockets.

My father introduced me. There were no class distinctions. Ranchers and buckaroos, teachers and preachers, saloon-keepers and miners, mothers and children, all gave me a cordial welcome.

The Inyo Academy, Bishop, and a pioneer farm in Round Valley, 1887.

I boarded and went to school at the Inyo Academy. We had splendid teachers. With gentleness and understanding they created harmony among that strange gathering of boys and girls, sons and daughters of cattlemen, of ranchers, of miners, of saloon-keepers, of county officers in a county whose area was twice that of New Jersey, and where, on election day, men traveled scores of miles to the polls.

There were pupils who were grown men. Most of their lives had been spent in the saddle or herding sheep. The spurs of their high-heeled boots clicked on the schoolroom floor.

Girls came with long riding skirts pinned over their dresses. They undid their skirts and left them on the pommel of their side saddles, which they cinched and uncinched themselves. Boys and girls from other towns, from Round Valley, Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, boarded at the Academy. Grace, my roommate, was the niece of a rancher and cattleman.

My father was away much of the time on surveying trips. He traveled in a buckboard, carrying transit and chains, picking up surveying crews where he might.

For Thanksgiving I went with Jessie, one of the girls who boarded at the Academy, to her home in Round Valley. Her family came from Eastern Canada, across the St. Lawrence River, from Madrid, N.Y., to Sonora. They heard that in Inyo County the corn grew twice as high as a tall man and the pumpkins and squash were so large that men mistook them for sorrel horses

lying down in the field. They decided to come and buy a farm.

They were the only people in that valley of ranchers that I ever heard talk about a farm. Their house was so like Grandmother's in New York State that it seemed a bit of the East set down in a fertile valley with high peaks all around. There were prim flower beds and eastern-looking barns and granaries and an orchard. There were four-poster beds in the house and old bureaus and cupboards that had been shipped around the Horn and brought over the mountains by ox-team from Sonora. There were potted plants that had to be wrapped up at night in the winter time.

Jessie's father had kind, blue eyes, and a white, neatly clipped beard. His wife's name was Zipporah. She wore starched percale dresses and her hair was frizzed on her forehead. We sat around the fire visiting that night and ate apples and pine nuts. They were smooth, brown nuts with a meaty kernel and a very different flavor from the butternuts and beechnuts we used to eat during the long winter evenings at Grandmother's.

Ranching in Long Valley, north of Bishop, 1887.

School was out. Grace and I rode horseback to the mountains. Her mother rode in the cook wagon. The Chinaman was with the outfit, and he cooked our meals. We rode all day and camped at night. The next day we were on the way at dawn. We reached the top of a long, steep climb, just as the sun touched the peaks of the Sierras. Long Valley lay before us. It was another Acadian Grand Pre. The cattle grazed quietly, raising their heads to look at us in startled surprise as we came along the road. They were growing sleek and plump, and Grace's uncle said they would make as fine a bunch of beef cattle as he had ever seen.

The grazing lands held by him and Frances' father adjoined.

Grace and Frances and I stayed first at one ranch, then at the other. We were inseparable all that summer through days that were filled with excitement: horse-breaking, round-ups, branding, riding the trails that led off into the mountains.

The ranch houses were built of pine logs chinked with adobe. There were wide porches. Heavy saddles and silver-mounted bridles hung on wooden pegs on the wall. There were corrals made of saplings, laid one on top of the other and laced with raw-hide to posts driven into the ground. They were higher than a man's hand could reach. We were always on hand when unbroken horses were driven in off the range.

We watched them mill about, their heads high, their eyes rolling, sensing some danger. A buckaroo rode a saddle horse into the corral. He seemed not to be thinking about anything in particular. Suddenly a lasso swung in his hand and cut through the air. The noose settled over some proud head. He wound the rope around the horn of his saddle. Then the battle was on. The horse was led, rearing or plunging, or trembling, to the spot outside the corral where a saddle lay in readiness.

A blind was put over his eyes. Stealthily a saddle blanket was slipped on his back. Then the saddle was settled in place, very slowly and quietly. Carefully the buckaroo brought up the cinch and tightened it. I have never seen more infinite patience than that used by a cowboy when saddling an animal for the first time. Older, saddle-broken horses learned how to swell their

bellies to keep the cinch from being pulled too tight, but these new victims knew no defense. The buckaroo put the toe of his heavily spurred boot into the stirrup. He swung himself lightly into the saddle. "Let'er buck!" There was the thrill of combat in his voice. The blinder dropped. For an instant the animal stood still. Then his head plunged downward, his back arched, his legs stiffened, and he bucked and kicked and screamed in a frenzied effort to free himself from the incubus that threatened his freedom.

Spectators gathered. The harder the horse fought, the greater the sport. Sometimes he was able to throw his rider or make him pull leather. But more often he was gradually worn down, cowed, beaten; then he was spurred into a mad gallop over the meadows to come home at night-fall, lathered in sweat, his head hanging to the ground. He was broken to the saddle.

At first I couldn't bear the sight, and ran into the farthest corner of the log house to get away. But the girls followed me and made fun of me, and dragged me out to see the next one--a gray "McBride" horse, the hardest breed on the range to subdue. Grace was hugging herself with delight. This was to be her horse. Her uncle had given him to her. He was a beauty. No other one in the corrals held its head so proudly. He was roped and saddled. The blinder was dropped. The rider was thrown. The horse got away, but was lassoed and brought back to ultimate defeat. I suddenly realized that I was enjoying it. I was broken to the sight.

When evening came, the cowboys would sit on the porch in the moonlight and tell stories of horses they had broken and riders they had known, of cattle rustling, of brands and earmarks. They sang. Strange, plaintive songs that reminded me of the songs of the prairie. I have never been able to understand why a bronco-busting, devil-may-care buckaroo would sing verse after verse of the most pathetic songs and seem to find some needed outlet in the singing.

Visiting Old Charley at Pine City, a ghost town on Lake Mary (Mammoth Lakes), 1887.

When the two weeks were up, Frances and Grace and I went to see Old Charley. We rode across the flat meadowland and then began to climb an old mining road that wound up through manzanita, with its flat, green leaves shining against the smooth red bark of the strangely sprawling bush, to higher levels of young pine and fir groves. Pine City lay still higher. The country grew more rough and huge boulders were across the wagon road that had once led to the camp. But there were always trails that wound around the fallen trees or rock slides back to the road.

We came to a rise that looked out over a flat basin at the foot of high peaks where the snow lay in great glistening drifts. Through the pines and firs and spruce trees we saw the sparkling blue waters of Lake Mary. For the first time that piece which I had learned from the old *National Fifth Reader* in the little country school at Madrid, meant something to me:

Girt round by rugged mountains the
fair Lake Constance lies
In her blue heart reflected shine
back the starry skies,
And watching each white cloudlet
float silently and slow
You think a piece of heaven lies on
our earth below.

All along the neglected road there were old log cabins, some with the roofs caved in and meadow grass growing around them as though no paths had ever led to their doors. In a grove of firs we saw a well preserved cabin, and there were evidences about the place that Old Charley had taken up his abode there.

It was the prettiest spot imaginable. Wild roses blossomed on bushes that grew behind the cabin where the sandy hillside started up from the meadow. There were red columbine along a stream that gurgled by. Pine birds, deep blue as a shadowed mountain lake, flew to a muddy mass that Old Charley said was the tailings pond.

We left Jinny and Joan plodding round and round the circle, as though they had never dreamed of bunch grass. Old Charley told us where to find a wild strawberry patch, and said he would make a short cake and we would have a picnic. The berries were small and sweet and of a flavor unknown in cultivated berries. Years later in Paris I saw berries like them sold at exhorbitant prices and remembered Old Charley and his strawberry patch in the mountains.

When we returned, there was a fire going in the ruins of an old fireplace where a cabin had once stood. Old Charley was making frying-pan bread, and trout that he had caught in Lake Mary that morning were sizzling over the fire. They were so fresh that they squirmed in the bacon grease in which he cooked them. We had a stump for a table and rocks for chairs. The frying-pan bread was cut through the middle and the mashed berries put between the crisp layers. Old Charley brought dishes and beans from his cabin. He said no miner's meal was complete without beans. That was the kind of picnic one never forgets!

While he ate, Old Charley told us of the time when Pine City had been a camp of ten thousand people. There had been Fourth of July celebrations on Lake Mary, and the flat that we saw covered with the new growth of pine and fir trees had been a clearing where there were cabins and stores and saloons and gambling houses.

Then we went to look at Old Charley's cabin. There was one room, built of logs, and a lean-to shed-kitchen. A rough pine bedstead stood in one corner, and a wood box as big as the bed hugged the fireplace. There was a pine table with the top worn smooth and so soaked with bacon grease that it looked as if it had been rubbed with wax. There were shelves with mining supplies and a black kettle with a spout, which Old Charley said was a retort. The fireplace was wide enough to take great pine logs.

Old Charley said he had found everything in the cabin. The wood box was even filled with logs. It happened that the cabin stood in a sheltered spot where the weight of the snow had not been as great as in other places.

While Old Charley smoked his corn-cob pipe, he told us more about Pine City in the days when he was a young man.

"You know," he said, "folks shake the dust of a busted mining town like rats desert a sinking ship. They walk out an' leave everything, furniture and beds an' dishes on the table, maybe, like they had et an' run. I suppose that's the reason they got the name of 'ghost

towns.'

"When the mines are running and freight teams hauling ore an' bullion out, it's easy enough to get in furniture an' fixin's, an' some of these cabins was done up real purty. Men had their families come an' the wimmen put paper on the walls an' lace curtains at the windows. An' then the mines closed down in the fall an' every one ran like scared coyotes to get out before the snows came.

"There was a fellow in camp that had been a kind of pardner of mine, off an' on, up around Feather River and over in Nevada in early days on the Comstock. He'd got married an' brought his wife up to the camp at Pine City.

"We thought we had a lead in a tunnel that looked as though it might break into a pocket any time, an' we decided to hole in for the winter an' maybe do a little work if the snow wasn't too heavy, an' be here on the job when spring broke.

"He'd ought to have sent his wife out, but she was a purty thing an' they was terribly in love. She was young an' strong an' was all for stayin' an' spendin' the winter with us. We had one of the biggest storms I ever saw in these mountains an' before it stopped the snow was six feet on the level and drifted over the roofs of the cabins in lots of places. The nearest settlement was a hundred miles away an' there wasn't any way to get out except on snow-shoes.

"One day my pardner and I thought we'd go out an' kill some snow-shoe rabbits an' have some fresh meat. We were cleanin' our shot guns an' somehow a shell got jammed in my pardner's gun barrel, an' while he was tryin' to get it out the gun went off an' shot his wife.

"I've been through some bad times in rip-roarin' mining camps, but never anything like that. My pardner was beside himself. I was afraid to leave him alone a minute. We couldn't bury his wife. There was no place to dig a grave. All we could do was to make a hole in the snow an' keep her there till spring.

"He wouldn't go away an' leave her. At first he raved like a maniac. Then he took sick an' I had to nurse him an' keep drivin' new stakes in the snow that kept driftin', so as we could find her body in the spring before the coyotes did.

"My pardner got well after a while an' when the snow melted off on the flat down there we took his wife down an' buried her. She came from back East an' she had always dreamed of havin' a house with a picket fence around it, so nothin' would do but we must put a

picket fence around her grave. It took us quite awhile to do it with the tools we had, but we did a good job. I was noticin' the other day, that fence is just as strong an' straight as 'twas when we put it there.

"My pardner an' I moved into another cabin and started workin' that tunnel in the spring, but all the deserted cabins, with the dishes on the tables an' maybe a baby's crib or a rag doll lyin' around, got on our nerves an' we left to find new diggin's."

Old Charley recovers a button of gold and silver, Pine City, 1887.

A few days after the Indian dance we went to see Old Charley make a "clean-up." The muddy mass in the pit of the arastra was allowed to run off into the tailings pond. Old Charley scooped up the amalgam that lay in the cracks, between the flat rocks in the bottom of the pit, and put it in a piece of chamois skin and wrung it until all the quicksilver possible had passed through the interstices of the chamois. The mass left was dry amalgam. He put this in the funny black kettle that was a retort, and placed it over a fire in the old out-of-doors fireplace.

We had another picnic and each of us repeated scraps of *"Hello!" "Hello!" "Why, Jim!" "Why, Dan!"* to Old Charley's huge enjoyment. Then Old Charley opened the retort and showed us the button of gold and silver in the bottom. It seemed so small for all the time and trouble it took to get it! But Old Charley said he would send it to the mint in San Francisco and get enough out of it to buy beans and coffee and flour and bacon for the winter. He had cut the grass on an upper meadow to make hay for Jinny and Joan. He hadn't got to the pocket in the mine yet, but he was sure he would find it soon.

So we left Old Charley and followed the boulder-strewn road down from the mountains, where we gathered wild strawberries and rode over trails to tree-fringed mountain lakes and found high meadows where tiger lilies and lark-spur grew above our heads.

Student days in old San Francisco, 1890.

When I see the burden of preparation that is placed on young men and women nowadays before they can reach the threshold of one of the professions, I smile to think of the inexperienced country girl, with only the old Academy behind her, who knocked so fearlessly at the door of Toland Hall in San Francisco.

In the days when Dr. Toland built this Hall at the North Beach end of Stockton Street, I am sure it never occurred to him that such a phenomenon as a woman knocking for addmission would ever be seen.

Dr. Toland left a "munificent practice" of sixteen thousand dollars a year to cross the plains, journeying from Independence, Missouri, the railway terminus, to San Francisco, in seventy-six days, the shortest time on record. He was in quest of adventure and gold. He found both, not in the mines, but in the practice of his profession where the need was great, and the fees for medical service exceeded a doctor's Arabian Night's dream.

Those were the days when physicians had their offices in tents, when two ounces of gold dust, thirty-two dollars, was paid for one visit, and quinine was the cure-all for disease. Records tell us that an old-time physician sold his supply of quinine at auction at sixty-four dollars an ounce. Laudanum was priced at one dollar a drop, in the days when boots cost forty dollars a pair, blankets a hundred

dollars, and potatoes one dollar a pound.

Dr. Toland established offices on Montgomery Street in San Francisco, and never moved from that location. He often saw as many as four hundred patients a day, besides the bed-side cases. He became a millionaire, a man respected and honored in the medical world, and in 1872 built, at an expense of seventy-five thousand dollars, Toland Hall, a school where young men might receive instruction in the art of medicine.

One pauses to wonder how far seventy-five thousand dollars would go today toward building a medical school and equipping its laboratories.

In 1873 Lucy Wanzer—who was to be the first woman to graduate in medicine in California—made application for admission to Toland Hall. Dr. Toland must have felt himself well out of it when he listened to the controversy that arose. She was firmly told that a medical lecture hall, a dissecting room, and clinics were not proper places for women. She was advised to go East to some woman's college in Boston or Philadelphia.

Nothing daunted, she laid the matter before the Board of Regents of the University, much to their consternation. For months the Board of Regents and their attorneys wrestled with the problem. Finally they reluctantly affirmed: "It is an organic law of the state that male and female shall have equal chance in the university in all its departments."

When I entered Toland Hall, although seventeen years had elapsed since Dr. Wanzer had forced the University Regents to make their decision, the attitude of many of the professors and students toward women in Medicine was not greatly different from what it had been in her day. She was still, in their eyes, an experiment and something of a joke.

The course had been lengthened from two to three years, but the only requirement for entrance was an elementary examination in English, which I passed without difficulty. This allowed me to enter the preliminary term, which gave me three months to demonstrate whether I was capable of being enrolled in the regular term, as a student of Medicine.

My father stayed a few days and went with me to the lectures and dissecting room. I shall never forget my first sight of that old dissecting room. Bodies in all stages of preservation and decomposition were placed on rough board tables with zinc tops. Maggots were not infrequent denizens of those "stiffs" which had been carelessly handled, and only the smoke from the pipes of the students made it possible to stay in the room.

Shanley, the janitor, had charge of the pickling vats in the basement, and subjects for dissection were supposed to be drawn alphabetically. Many were the wiles practiced on Shanley to insure a well muscled, well cured "stiff" for those who were in his friendly services.

My father showed signs of weakening when he saw the room. He glowered at the young medical students who cast curious glances in my direction.

But after the dissecting room incident, I was received in the students' boarding house on Telegraph Hill as one of the group. It was my privilege to sit around the big table in the study room, where some part of a skeleton was always suspended from the gas chandelier in the center, and share in the quizzes and discussions. They accepted me in brotherly comradeship and took me with them on their explorations of San Francisco.

It was a real adventure to take a cable car that jerked up and down the steep hills. We sat up in front in the out-of-doors seats that ran along either side, and when the grip-man shouted: "Mind the curve!" we dug in our toes and braced ourselves to keep from being hurled into space. It was much the same sensation I had experienced when sliding down hill in Grandmother's orchard. At the end of the line we transferred to the steam cars that ran to the Cliff House. The cinders that we accumulated in our eyes on the way interfered somewhat with our enjoyment of that part of the trip, but it gave us an opportunity to show with what dexterity we could turn the eyelid of a fellow student inside out and extract the offending body.

I am told that the old Cliff House, with its spires and turrets and towers, was a glaring example of the worst possible architecture, but there has never been a Cliff House that has seemed to me one half as beautiful.

From the promenade, overhanging the ocean, we watched the waves of the Pacific lazily lapping the sand. We heard the plump, shiny seals barking as they slid into the water from Seal Rocks, frolicking like happy school children. We laughed over the story of the Englishman who exclaimed when he saw them: "By Jove, those seals must be wonderfully tame, you know, or their owners wouldn't dare let them loose right out in the ocean!"

We climbed to Sutro Heights where the man who had built the Sutro Tunnel to tap the Comstock Lode sat in his unpretentious home and derived the keenest pleasure from watching the people come and go in the gardens that he had planted for their enjoyment.

Friday was the best time to see the fishing boats come in and when a holiday fell on that day, we made a grand tour of the waterfront, starting at Meigg's Wharf soon after dawn. The boats came swarming into the harbor—Italian feluccas, some painted white with blue gunwales and blue or pink decks, others white with green trimmings. Their three-cornered sails filled to the fresh ocean breeze and they rode the waves like graceful, homing gulls. The throaty commands of the Italian skippers sounded across the water and the sails folded like birds' wings.

The fishermen in gum boots, shabby trousers, bright sashes, and checked flannel shirts came into view. There was a rattle of chains as they cast anchor. Their catch was scooped from the deck into baskets and landed. Everything on board was made snug. They ate their breakfast on deck from a big bowl of stew, accompanied by bread and claret wine. Then they cleaned their nets, or if they had been trawling, they coiled the lines in circular baskets and pressed the hooks into the rim.

The wharf was a busy place. The rays

of the rising sun glistened on the sides of flounders and striped bass, red rock-cod and salmon, mackerel and crab, sharks and starfish, octopus and devil-fish with their squirming arms lined with little cups. The choice of the catch was loaded into boxes, stacked for the market, and carted away in big wagons. Hucksters with broken-down carts bargained for the less desirable portions. Chinamen, with baskets swung on flexible poles that rested on their shoulders, departed with shark's fins, dogfish, squids, clams and shrimps.

The wharf settled to the routine of the day. Decks were scrubbed, nets mended and festooned along the wharf to dry. Gulls gathered for the feast of small fish that were thrown from the nets. A whale that had followed in the wake of the fishing fleet spouted off shore.

We talked with old fishermen, who told us that Meigg's Wharf had once been a fashionable promenade and that the landing covering the site of Clarke's Point and India Dock where the old clipper fleet, the finest ships of their day, had discharged their cargoes.

Following east along the waterfront, we saw four-masted sailing vessels riding in on the breeze that brought them through the Golden Gate like winged clouds. The wharves were crowded with shipping, steamers and trig schooners and Chinese junks, squatty and foreign-looking. Into the docks at Washington and Jackson Streets came river steamers, loaded with fruits and vegetables. Their clumsy stern wheels churned the water to foam. The fruit dealers were there to bargain for their share. The canners departed with their loads of "cots" and "toms" (apricots and tomatoes).

The government steamer docked and landed officers and soldiers on shore leave for the day, picking up others, to continue its way to the Presidio and to Alcatraz Island, the military prison, that rose, grim as some pirates' fortress, from the smiling waters of the bay. Farther along were the coast steamers, from Alaska, from Puget Sound and San Diego. Stout tugs like busy bumblebees tooted with importance. Across the street were the sailors' harbors: "The Fair Breeze," "Snug Harbor," and the beer halls where Jack had a riotous time as long as his leave or his money lasted. To offset these were the Mariner's Church and the little band of Salvation Army workers, who welcomed him to a safer if less exciting harbor.

There were fascinating odors of tea and spices, sugarcane and hemp, coffee and tropical fruits. We went on board a sailing vessel from Mexico and while the students drank Mexican mescal with the ships' officers, I teased the gaudy parrots who swore at me in the language in which "Dios" and "Diablo" can never be made to sound profane. One of the mates was quite taken with me and gave me a Mexican shawl and a dried porcupine fish, which I treasured for years.

Helen MacKnight M.D. opens her office in Bishop, 1895.

But I soon forgot everything else in my first hand-to-hand, unaided conflict with death. There were two physicians in town. One was an old army doctor, who refused to consult with me. The other was a man who treated my degree as a rare joke. He said I might be a good nurse.

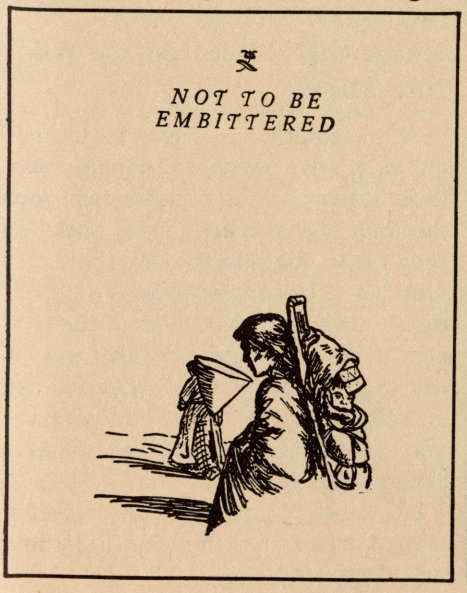
My stepmother needed nursing and tenderness more than she did prescriptions. She had been over-drugged. There were hours of terrible uncertainty, when it seemed she would slip away from me, but gradually she gained strength. She recovered.

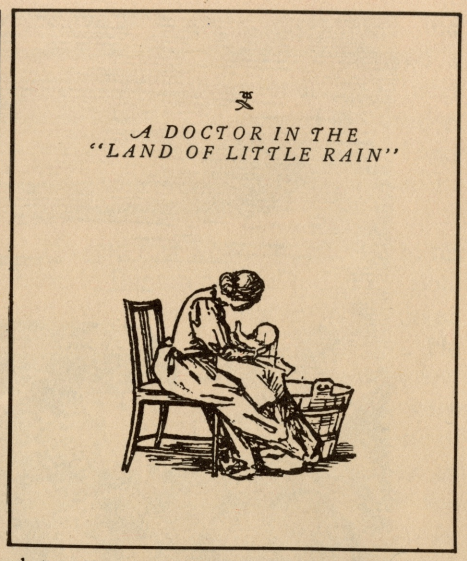
My father was immensely gratified, not by the fact that his wife had been spared to him, but by my ability to cure her. He went about the town, telling everyone whom he saw: "My wife is getting well. The doctors gave her up, but Nellie came home and cured her!"

I knew it was useless to ask him to send me back to San Francisco. My place in the hospital was filled. I fitted up an office in the front room of the house and put out my shingle --Helen M. MacKnight, M.D., Physician and Surgeon. My father was proud of the M.D., but resented the Helen. I had been christened Nellie. That was my name. But I remembered the words of the Dean, and the sign was not changed. I put in a small stock of drugs (it would be necessary to fill my own prescriptions), bought a medicine case, and started in.

My conveyance was a two-wheeled cart with a jump seat. I harnessed and unharnessed the horse myself. I would stand at the back of the cart with the reins in my hand, raise the seat, clamber in and start off. I used to smile sometimes, wondering what those professors with their carriages and coachmen would think if they could see me.

There was little road work done in those days, and the cart would grind through the sand and strike sparks from the boulder-like rocks that were strewn along the way. Then there were the barbed-wire gates in the fences to be reckoned with. One pulls and tugs with might and main to slip the loop of wire over the top and so release the gate. Then when it seems impossible to get it over the last inch, it suddenly lets go, the post springs out of the lower loop and attacks you, winding the strands of barbed wire around you with all the ferocity of inanimate things. Escaping with minor cuts and scratches, you lead your horse through, and then with grim





determination you pull and tug at the gate, apparently shrunken several inches in the encounter, to get the post back into the bottom loop and somehow manage to lasso the wire over the top. If your horse stands quietly through this performance, well and good, if not you are plainly out of luck. Fortunately mine was "gate broken."

Patients came to me, mostly chronic cases at first, who had failed to get relief elsewhere and were curious to see what the new woman doctor might do for them. Every man, woman, and child in such an isolated place has a personal interest in the health of the community. If a woman is "expecting," every good wife knows just when, can tell how long her "morning sickness" lasted, and will venture an opinion on the sex of the child by the way the mother is "carrying it." When a woman is known to be in labor a kind of tenseness settles over the whole community until word is passed about that it is all over. Then the length of labor, the sex and weight of the child, whether "they" wanted a boy or a girl, and other important factors connected with the case are reviewed in detail.

Doctors are supposed to be able to bury their mistakes, but if they do not wish to have post-mortem discussions of why and how it happened they had best keep to the cities. A young doctor, fresh from medical college, can pass many embarrassing moments in the presence of the neighborhood midwife. Country people have been through the stress of illness, without trained medical assistance so often that they have an astonishing knowledge of human ills gained in the school of experience.

Country doctor in Owens Valley during the 1890s.

I bought an old counter from a store and had shelves built behind it. In the room there was an air-tight heating stove, a cot where I slept, and a rough table, which I had made for the examination and treatment of patients. It was not a luxurious place, but it was a peaceful refuge where no jealous, suspicious eyes followed me as I came and went. Grace and her husband lived near-by.

Mary Austin was teaching at the old Academy. She had recently written that exquisitely beautiful book in which she christened the valley, "The Land of Little Rain." She would come in the evening and sit with me and recount fragments of stories that afterwards took shape in "The Basket Woman" and "The Flock."

Strange things happened in that office, difficult to picture now when the telephone is at hand to summon the doctor, and, in an emergency, he arrives in his automobile or perhaps in his aeroplane almost before the receiver is back on the hook. I recall one day when a housewife in a kitchen dress, with hair loosening from the hair pins that held it and falling down her back, came running the length of Main Street to my office with her child in convulsions in her arms. By the time I had procured a wash tub of hot water from my landlady (bath tubs were an unknown luxury) and soused the youngster in it, the office held a good part of the population of the town. They were all as relieved as the mother was when the child was restored to her arms, limp and relaxed, but quite himself again.

For a while I hired a "rig" from the livery stable to answer calls in the country. But an accommodating youngster decided to be born about that time, and through officiating at the ceremony I acquired a fine bay horse as recompense for my services. The hardware store "trusted" me for a new, single top-buggy.

About this time my father deserted my stepmother and went away to the mining camps of the South. He drifted in the region of Randsburg and the Yellow Aster Mine for years. When he was no longer able to provide for himself, I helped to make his last days

comfortable, as I knew Mama would have wanted me to do. My stepmother was left penniless. I found that she dreamed of having a little shop where she could sell fancy goods and baked beans and brown bread of her own making. I helped her to realize that dream, and she lived, busily happy, for many years.

I faced the future with new responsibilities, willingly assuming the notes that my father had signed to raise the money to send me to college, and debts that he had contracted with the promise that he would pay when I graduated and began to practice medicine.

My practice flourished. Even twins happened along to enhance my reputation. I was engaged to confine a woman whom the Army doctor had warned not to have any more children, or she would probably die in the attempt. She had given birth to three girls and the desire, shared by herself and her husband, for a boy had inspired her with the courage to defy the ultimatum.

She studied *Tautology*, a book widely read by expectant mothers at that time, and followed its precepts closely. I have never been sure how much of the credit for the successful outcome of that case should be given to *Tautology* and how much to the instruction in pre-natal care that I had received in Toland Hall and the Children's Hospital. At any rate, Aesculapius could not have sent me a greater boon than that patient.

I was called. The woman passed through a normal, uneventful labor, and was delivered of another girl. I had hoped, as ardently as the parents, for a boy, and sympathized with their disappointment. But on examination, I found that the rotundity that disappears so miraculously when the child is born still persisted. I smiled, remembering the interne who had retired too soon. Without doubt there was another baby, and it might be a boy!

I remember going out to the father, sitting by the kitchen stove, holding his new little girl in his arms. "Don't be too disappointed," I said, "we might have a boy yet!" He looked up at me, entirely puzzled.

"What do you mean?"

"There is another baby, and it might be a boy."

I am sure that the father doubted that I knew what I was talking about. He may have experienced a pang of regret that he had placed his wife in the care of a person with such astonishing lack of the knowledge of the process of nature. But the twin was born, and it was a boy. I needed no press agents. My patient who had been threatened with such dire misfortune if she ever tried to bring another child into the world had borne twins with no difficulty whatsoever! Everybody in the valley knew about it.

Although my sign read "Helen M. MacKnight, M.D." in big gilt letters, Dr. McLean had graduated a Dr. Nellie, in spite of his efforts to the contrary, for I was Dr. Nellie to the whole countryside.

Messengers came on horse-back, usually some neighbor who had been summoned and had rushed off with very little idea of what the emergency might be. Barring a "baby case" or an accident, the doctor was left to use her imagination. I carried my own drug store and hospital equipment and nursing aids with me.

I let down the gates in barbed-wire fences to reach women in confinement, babies with pneumonia, and those afflicted with all the diseases and injuries that make up the practice of the country doctor. I loved the work, the opportunity for service. But I felt very much alone.

Doctor Guy Doyle from the Wild Rose Mine.

A horse-back messenger summoned me to a little, one-store, mining town, tucked away in the mountains. I took the train to the nearest point and then drove over the desert to my patient. I found a girl of fifteen years, a sheep-man's wife, her blue eyes wide and bright, her face flushed with fever. A midwife, the only succor those women in isolated places knew, had confined her. The young mother was suffering from puerperal fever.

I did what I could for her and after midnight I went to the one hotel and

asked for a room. There was only one unoccupied. A doctor, who had come out from Chicago to work the Wild Rose Mine, had the room, but he was gone to Silver Peak, to look over their cyanide plant. Otherwise, he would have seen the case. He was not practicing, but was always ready to go in an emergency.

I looked through the Doctor's medicine case with interest and found that the drugs he used were similar to my own. I wondered what kind of man would be willing to give up the practice of medicine to work the Wild Rose Mine, and decided that he must have practiced a good many years to accumulate enough to go into a mining venture. I left a note telling the Doctor, who was expected back by noon, what I had done for the unfortunate child-mother, and asked him to see the patient and take charge of the case upon his return.

I explained the necessity for an operation and the fact that I did not have the proper instruments with me, as I had had no reason to believe it was a case demanding surgery. A lay-over meant two days away from my own practice, as the train went down the valley one day and back the next.

On the day of the next down train there was a knock at my door. I opened it. A young man stood on the step. His city clothes and derby hat stamped him as a stranger. When he raised his hat, I thought he was the handsomest man I had ever seen. The fine head, sensitive mouth, laughing eyes, curling hair, now bronze, now gold in the rays of the setting sun, made a picture that time has never erased from my memory.

He came into my office. His presence seemed to fill the room with youth and vitality. He introduced himself. He was the Doctor from the Wild Rose Mine. He wished to see Dr. MacKnight.

When I said I was Dr. MacKnight, he began to laugh. I was so indignant that I felt like shaking him. Then he explained the joke. He had pictured me as one of his pet abominations, a "hen medic." He expected to meet a stern, unprepossessing female, who would look upon his youth and inexperience with scorn. He had heard about me from the mine superintendent whom I had treated for typhoid at Silver Peak, but "No one told me you were just a kid," he said.

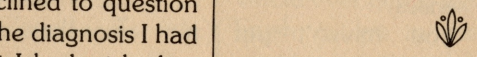
It was my turn to laugh, then, and explain to him that I had pictured a middle-aged, professional man, who would probably be inclined to question what I had done and the diagnosis I had made in the case that I had wished to turn over to his care.

He said that when he returned to his hotel in Benton he had found my note and called on the patient. He agreed that she must have an operation. He had taken the train that afternoon and come down to get the necessary instruments, as he had brought none of his own to the mine. I had worked so long, fighting my way against the criticism and scorn of the other physicians of the town, that it seemed a wonderful thing to find a man who believed in me and was willing to work with me to the common end of the greatest good to the patient. It was like renewing one of those fine friendships that had meant so much to me in my college days.

The evening was too short for all the things we found to talk about: the amazing fact that we were the same age, that we had both graduated in medicine before we were twenty-one, he taking his medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago, while I was studying at Toland Hall. All these things seemed to draw us together.

He explained that his father, a lawyer, had become interested in the old Mammoth Mine near Pine City, and had encouraged him to go into the mining game. He was excited by the country, the people; it was all a great adventure to him. The next morning he went away with the instruments, but it seemed to me that I would never be alone again. He came back in a few days to report the progress of our patient. The child-mother would recover.

He continued to come, riding his saddle-horse down from the mine, dressed in high boots, a flannel shirt, and a wide Stetson, staying at the Valley View Hotel all night, spending the evening with me and going back in the morning. Ours was a horse and buggy courtship, as we rode to visit my patients. The Doctor still loves to tell how he used to drive with me into the country and be left to sit in the single-top buggy to freeze in the winter or broil in the summer, while I went in and sat with a sick child while the mother snatched a much-needed wink of sleep or washed and dressed a baby.



Our friendship grew. It seemed as if when I needed him most, the Doctor would come, unsummoned, to my assistance. He talked of his plans for the future--where he would travel, what he would do, when he made a fortune out of the Wild Rose Mine. Gradually he began to include me in those plans. I felt that he loved me, but he did not speak of love and I was glad; I had seen too many friendships broken on the threshold of love. I felt I could never marry a man whose fortunes and those of his family depended on the chance of striking a rich vein or seeing that vein "pinch out."

The Doctor came one evening. He was treading on air. He had brought down a bar of bullion from the Wild Rose Mine and shipped it to the San Francisco Mint. It was the first shipment he had made. He was confident that it would return at least three thousand dollars.

He swept me into his arms with boyish impetuosity. He kissed me again and again. He told me how happy he was to find me and take me away with him, away to far corners of the world, on the money we would make out of the Wild Rose Mine. My heart leaped to his kisses. I wanted to claim him for my own, but I dared not. The shadow of that wall had come from gold--sifting, gritting--lay between us.

The next week he came to get the returns from his shipment. I saw him walking up the street to my office. I could scarcely believe my eyes. His face was white. The buoyancy was gone from his step. I ran to the door to meet him. I thought he must be ill.

"Sweetheart," I cried, "what has happened?"

He dropped into a chair and looked at me as if I were something he had found and lost.

"The bullion," he said, and his voice sounded old and weary. "I just got the returns. That bar won't net me one hundred dollars! I'm ruined. I've put everything into the Wild Rose, and I'll never get anything out."

I began to laugh and tears of happiness ran down my cheeks.

"I'm so glad! So glad!" I exclaimed.

"Glad? What do you mean?" He looked at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

"I'm so glad you haven't put everything into the Wild Rose Mine. You haven't put love and youth and health into it year after year. The money invested is well spent, if it has made the years to come safe for us."

"You mean that you don't mind? That you will marry me, even if I am dead-broke, with nothing to offer you but what I can earn in the practice of medicine?"

"What you and I can earn together, dear."

The doctor shut down the Wild Rose Mine, settled up his affairs as best he could, with what money there was left and I.O.U.'s for the rest. He went to Independence, the county seat forty-five miles away, opened an office in the Norman House and started in.

The little saddle animal that had been the Doctor's faithful companion on the trails was now hitched to a cart, and the medicine chest that had been put aside for the crucible and scorifiers of the assay office, where he had searched for values in the valueless ore of the Wild Rose Mine, came into its own.

The train that ran up the valley one day and back the next never failed to carry a message to one or the other of the young M.D.'s, whose activities were at first met with scorn, then with apprehension, by those men who were already established.

At Independence there was a big, bluff man who had graduated years before from a medical college in the East. He came West, with one lung gone, doomed to die of tuberculosis. He drifted to Owen's River valley and there, in the shadow of Mount Whitney, while driving over the desert to save the lives of others, saved his own.

He carried a stock of pills and powders in his capacious pockets, and whenever any one stopped him on the street or on the road and solicited his services to relieve them from some disorder, he would search in his vest pocket or coat or trouser pockets, according to the nature of the ailment, and bring forth some remedy that he assured them would relieve their affliction, and it usually did.

No trip was too long for him to undertake willingly, no family too poor to receive his care. He never kept any books and never presented a bill. When he needed some money, he would stop his patients wherever he happened to run across them and say:

"I've got to have some money, and I want you to get it for me damn quick!" The amount was never more than he knew they could pay, and the money was always forthcoming.

Having been free to run things on his own magnificent scale, burying his mistakes and levying tribute according to his needs, he resented having his empire invaded. He met the young pretender in the bar-room of the Norman House.

"So you're a doctor, are you?" he began. "I want you to understand there isn't room for another doctor in this part of the country."

"Well, I'm here!" replied the Doctor.

The older man shrugged and walked away, but there was never animosity between them after that.

The old order changeth. The days when a fever patient was put to bed with all his clothes and a sweater on and starved and doped until he got well or died, practically with his boots on, had exacted a tremendous toll of human life and suffering, and when the new man was called in to treat a patient ill with typhoid at the hotel, the community opened its eyes and took him to their hearts.

Lady Luck, who had proved so fickle in the mining venture, smiled on the young Doctor.

The discovery of gold at Tonopah, 1900, brings prosperity to Owens Valley.

And so they were married and lived happily ever after. Perish the thought! What a very boring existence that would be. If there were no valleys, there would be no mountains. Peaks of joy and valleys of sorrow lay ahead, but we faced them together. Young doctors can look very dignified and serious, but they can be just as sentimental as other young married people. The Doctor put a telephone line from our house to his office in the drug store, about a block away, so that we could talk to each other. It was the first telephone in the town.

There is something about a country practice that weaves one into the pattern of the life of the community. We shared the joy of birth and the sadness of death with the people of the valley. We saw houses built on the old ranches for sons and daughters, and new families putting down their roots in the land that their parents had reclaimed from the desert.

A baby was born to us in the bed that old Jesus had brought all the way from Mexico to the valley. A dark haired baby girl. We had a double buggy now and a team of the fastest horses in the country, and we used to bundle up the baby and take her along to sleep soundly in some corner while we sat watching through the night with some family where birth or death was imminent.

Three weeks before the baby came, I attended a woman in confinement, three weeks afterward, another. So much for the physiological and psychological limitations of women in the practice of medicine.

Then came the first shadow that might have grown to a wall between us. Gold was discovered across the White Mountain range, in Tonopah, Nevada.

Jim Butler, a man who had known the great placer mines, who had watched the fortunes of the Comstock rise and fall, and had remained through it all a poor man, was always a prospector. He owned a small ranch in Nevada and when things were slack, he and his wife, Belle Butler, would hitch their burros to a buckboard and strike out. One night they made a dry camp and in the morning, while rounding up the burros, Jim noticed that one of them had loosed some rock that looked as though it might carry values. It was different from anything he had ever seen, and he scarcely considered it worth sampling. But his wife insisted that they take some of it along. She named the place *Tonopah,* an Indian name, meaning: no wood, no water.

Those samples were taken from what afterwards was known as the Buckboard Mine, on the Mizpah Lode. They assayed 350 ounces in silver and $152 in gold to the ton. It was not long before, in the words of Jim Butler: "The moneyed kings came riding, in the old-fashioned coaches, through sand and dust to see her wonderful wealth."

But when the moneyed kings arrived they found a man who was working in the interest of the miners. He was not hoodwinked by those powerful banks

that had controlled the fortunes of the Comstock, and came, endeavoring to tie up the new camp with a small bond. An expert who was sent out by the mining capitalists told Jim he might consider the property if he were sure the ledge went down.

Jim's reply was characteristic: "Well, by God, it doesn't go up!"

And it didn't. Pay ore was shipped from the grass roots and in Goldfield, a later find, sagebrush was pulled up and the soil shipped to the mint.

The valley was agog with excitement. Tradespeople loaded their goods on freight wagons and started across the mountains. Farmers followed with hay and grain and produce, which they sold at fabulous prices. The Doctor went, thrilled by the stories of the new bonanza. He returned, painting in glowing words the opportunities in the new, wide-open mining camp. They needed doctors, and being there on the ground would give a man the opportunity to get in on a lease with every chance of making a fortune. I listened, fearfully, thinking of our baby girl, and remembered another little girl who listened wonderingly while her father talked of "Gold" and "Out West,' and the wonderful opportunities that were there.

We discussed the matter. It would mean separation. Tonopah was just over the mountains, but separation is not a matter of distance but of the things that come in between. And so, generously, whole-heartedly, the baby's father gave up the chance of making a fortune to stay with his little family in the valley.

But some of that gold from Tonopah came to the Owen's River valley, and we all shared in the wealth brought into the community by the stimulus to trade and agriculture. The valley grew and new homes appeared. The power that was latent in our streams was harnessed to provide light and power for the mines across the mountains, and for the towns and ranches of the valley. We had never had gas, so that the old coal-oil lamps and acetylene buggy lamps were our only light until electricity was developed from the streams. Great power houses were built on the lake and stream where I had camped and caught my first mountain trout with my father.

Twenty-animal teams drew long freight wagons, loaded with huge pipes and giant transformers, through the town, up the mountain sides, over new roads that were great gashes along the canyons above the streams. Hundreds of men were employed. Terrible accidents happened.

There were hair-raising experiences when the Doctor was called on velvet-dark nights, when we drove over strange roads, with the mountains towering above us on one side and on the other dropping into inky blackness that hid the stream at the bottom of the canyon. I would walk on the outside edge of the road, carrying a lantern while the Doctor drove the frightened team, hugging close to the mountain side, where rock slides and boulders threatened the perilous ledge.

Los Angeles begins acquiring land for the Aqueduct.

The people of the valley had always cherished a dream that some day the Government Reclamation Service would impound the surplus water in the mountains, so that thousands of acres of the fertile desert might be brought under cultivation. The Government engineers arrived. But Los Angeles coveted not only the surplus water, but all of the water from our clear mountain streams.

The people of the valley raised their voices in protest when they saw the reclamation project, that had promised so much, fold up its tents and depart; saw the lands of the valley withdrawn from further settlement; watched, powerless to stay their tragedy, as one by one the irrigating canals, that were their only protection against the encroachment of the desert, were acquired by the Southern city. A broad gauge railroad was built to unite the narrow gauge Carson and Colorado with the main line at Mojave, and furnish transportation for materials to build the longest aqueduct in the world. The stage that had carried passengers from Keeler, through the deep sand around Owen's Lake, past Olancha, to which point the famous Twenty-Mule-Team Borax was hauled from Death Valley, on by Coyote Holes and Indian Wells, Red Rock Canyon and the Eighteen Mile House to Mojave, drove on to join the caravan of history.

Our first automobile.

We gave up our team and double buggy for an automobile. We struggled through the sand and over the hills, always wondering at the bottom if we would ever get to the top. We cut sage-brush to lay in the sandy roads to increase traction. We had a puncture every few miles, and bent our backs over a hand pump to inflate the new tire. I have had many a Panama hat ruined when I was thrown into the top of the car as we leaped the irrigating ditches. Many a time our engine flooded and died when we plunged into bridgeless streams and the Doctor waded in, knee deep, and brought rocks and brush or walked miles to procure a team of horses to pull us out.

The first airplane flies over Mount Whitney.

Then came that momentous day when white people and Indians, men, women and children, made a pilgrimage to Lone Pine, that "Little Town of the Grape-Vines" at the foot of Mount Whitney.

Silas Christofferson, a fearless aviator, was induced to come to Owen's River valley and attempt to fly over the highest mountain in the United States. It is evident that his hosts felt that the chances of his being able to accomplish the feat were about even, for the agreement was: "Two thousand dollars if you do it, and only expenses if you fail."

When we saw our first airplane we were all like the man who, on seeing his first locomotive, exclaimed: "They'll never start her!" and when that feat was accomplished was sure: "They'll never stop her!" We watched in awe while the man-made eagle climbed the skies to conquer the snow-capped king of all the peaks. Many strange and thrilling things had come to pass, but this was the most unbelievable of all.

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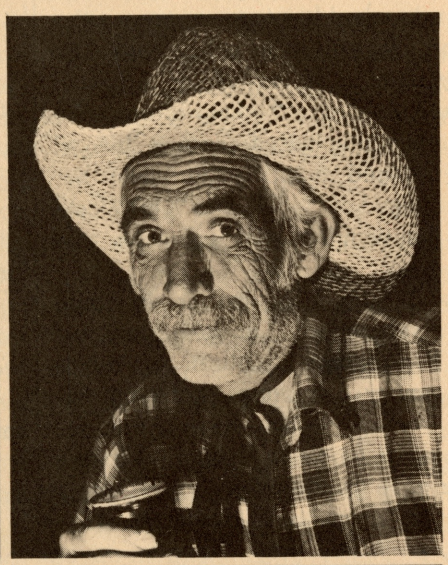

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19 Units. 233 E. Elm St. Phone 873-8118. Cribs in rooms; color TV; air conditioned; free ice; queen and full size beds; most pets allowed; lawn area; next to City Park.

EL RANCHO MOTEL —
16 Units. 274 Lagoon St. Phone 872-9251. Three kitchens; color TV; air conditioned; queen and full size beds; free ice; in-room coffee.

HIGH SIERRA LODGE —
51 Units. 1005 N. Main St. Phone 873-8426. Heated pool; indoor spa; color TV; air conditioned; direct dial phones; free cribs; king and queen beds; handicap rooms; tub/shower; in-room coffee; fish cleaning/freezer area; conference room available.

HOLIDAY LODGE — *(See Ad - Page 6)*
60 Units. 1025 N. Main St. Phone 873-3543. Cribs in rooms; color TV; heated pool; air conditioned; free ice; king and queen beds; direct dial phones; most pets okay; Bridal suite; wet bar; fireplace; indoor twirl spa; family rooms; fish cleaning/freezer; handicap facilities. Member of 'Best Western.'

MOUNTAIN VIEW MOTEL —
32 Units. 730 West Line St. Phone 873-4242. Free cribs in rooms; housekeeping units; TV; heated pool; air conditioned; free ice; king and full size beds; direct dial phones; pets okay; real coffee. Off-season rates from Oct. 31 - Mar. 31.

PARADISE LODGE —
16 Units. 15 miles north of Bishop. Phone 387-2370. Cabins/housekeeping units; full size beds; pets okay. Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge.

PIUTE LODGE —
16 Units. 796 West Line St. Phone 873-6391. All-electric kitchens; air conditioned; all-electric heat; color TV; direct dial phones; Beautyrest mattresses; shaded patio with BBQ; fish cleaning facilities.

PONDEROSA MOTEL —
60 Units. 651 N. Main St. Phone 873-6381. Color TV; queen beds; room phones; air conditioned. Meeting rooms for 275.

THUNDERBIRD FRIENDSHIP INN
23 Units. 190 West Pine St. Phone 873-4215. Color TV; air conditioned; queen beds; direct dial phones; combination shower/tubs; fish freezing; no pets. Walk to restaurants and shopping. Visa, Master Card, American Express, Carte Blanche, Diners and Conoco cards accepted.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS MOTEL —
43 Units. 535 S. Main St. Phone 872-1386. King, queen and double queen rooms; swimming pool; sauna; spa; color cable TV; free phones; clock radios; air conditioned; free coffee in lobby. American Express, Master Card, Visa welcome.

SPORTSMAN'S MOTEL —
32 Units. 636 N. Main St. Phone 873-5833. Kitchens; TV; air conditioned; free ice; king and queen beds; pets okay; pool; recreation area; direct dial phones. Restaurant on premises. Off-season rates from Nov. 1 - Apr. 15.

STARLIGHT MOTEL — *(See Ad - Page 51)*
22 Units. 192 Short St. Phone 873-4912. Pool; cable TV; air conditioned; free ice; king and full size beds; family units; kitchens/kitchenettes; fish cleaning facilities/freezer; horseshoe pit; pets okay; free cribs in rooms; complimentary coffee in rooms. Weekly rates available.

VAGABOND MOTEL —
80 Units. 1030 N. Main St. Phone 873-6351. Color TV; heated pool; children's playground; air conditioned; all queen beds; family units; sauna bath; fish cleaning facilities/freezer. Restaurant on premises.

VILLAGE MOTEL —
12 Units. 286 West Elm St. Phone 873-3545. Housekeeping units; queen and full size beds; cribs and rollaways; color TV; air conditioned; phones in rooms; in-room coffee; heated pool and kiddie pool; fish cleaning area; lawn; BBQ area with picnic table; free ice; freezer available, pets okay.

LONE PINE

FRONTIER MOTEL — *(See Ad - Page 6)*
56 Units. 1008 S. Main St. Phone 876-5571. Direct dial phones; color TV; heated pool; in-room coffee. Member of 'Best Western.

MOTEL DOW VILLA — *(See Ad - Page 51)*
39 Units. 310 S. Main St. Phone 876-5521. King, queen, double size beds; color cable TV; telephones; pool and spa; coffee in rooms; some pets okay. Master Card, Visa, American Express, Carte Blanche.

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SIERRA NEVADA INN –
156 Units. Box 918 Mammoth Lakes. Phone 934-2515. In LA area phone (213) 829-3515. Large rooms; kitchens & suites; color TV; limited fireplaces; pool; jacuzzi; sauna; 3 tennis courts. Free winter transportation to the Main Lodge.

WILD WOOD INN — *(See Ad - Page 6)*
32 Units. On Main St/ Hwy 203. PO Box 568 Mammoth Lakes. Phone 934-6855. Two miles on the Shuttle Bus run to skiing and cross country skiing; large jacuzzi & sauna; in-room color TV. Member 'Best Western.'

OWENS VALLEY'S INDIAN HERITAGE

by Dan Burnham

In the beginning, Pokoh, the Old Man, created the earth. Then, from the soils of different regions, he created the many Indian tribes. He did this because he did not wish them to wander about the earth, but to remain on their native lands. Because Indians are created from the land they are born on, they feel a strong attachment to it. It is part of them, and they of it.

This Paiute myth may explain why many Indians have an affinity with their native homelands; why the plants and animals of these regions have become an integral part, not only of their diet, but of their very way of life; and why these people, their myths and traditions, are as much a part of the land as the trees and rivers.

The Paiute and Shoshone peoples of the Owens Valley settled here only after thousands of years of nomadic wandering. They called the land Payahu Nadu, In a River Valley, and they managed to live here in relative peace and harmony for over a thousand years. The Valley gave them more than a home: it provided food, clothing, shelter, the resources for such crafts as pottery and basketry, and a setting for their unique myths and legends.

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One of the few who can recall what life was like when the Indians still clung to many of their ancient customs is eighty-one-year-old Dewey Charles, a full-blooded Paiute. Dewey was born on July 4, 1901, in Bodie, which was still very much alive then, and spent part of his childhood there. He has lived for many years on the reservation in Bishop.

Dewey reports that a popular activity in Bodie was gambling. "These white people bet money against the Indian race horses," he says. "These wild horses, you know." He says that a hat would be filled with gold, and when the stakes got high enough, the race would begin. The white people would pit their horses against the Indian ponies on a circular race course. "The only way the Indians beat them, was to go around two times. Those wild horses are pretty long-winded, you know." Dewey says that such wild horses are still found east of Mono Lake, but "we just can't do nothing with them... we have no more buckaroos."

Much of the Indian culture had disappeared, though, even before the birth of Dewey Charles. For example, before the coming of white settlers, the Paiutes had a tradition unique to their tribe: boys between the ages of 14 and 19 would leave in groups of ten on a journey to last five years. This was a rite of passage, a preparation for the responsibilities of manhood. They would be equipped with little more than bows and arrows and a few simple tools. Led by two young men who had already completed the journey, they would set out toward the south, passing through Southern California into Arizona, then proceeding north into Nevada, Utah and Idaho, then southward once more, toward home. Since they were allowed to take no provisions, they had to learn to fend for themselves, taking whatever food they could find in the surrounding environment.

As they proceeded, they would stop briefly at each Indian village they encountered. In this way, they would learn about customs and lifestyles of other peoples of the West. The journey, then, besides teaching them to survive on their own, also taught them about life outside their valley, and they would return home well-rounded and, it was hoped, wiser.

The tradition of the journey abruptly ended with the coming of the pioneers. The young men were afraid of the white man's guns. The journey has not been undertaken since, and there are few today who even remember it was once a part of their culture.

When he returned home after his journey, the young man would be ready for responsibilities of life as an adult. His primary activity, from then on, would be hunting. Bows and arrows were formed with sharpened pieces of obsidian, chalcedony or chert. Juniper was preferred for a bow, but oak, willow, birch and evergreen cedar were also used. The bow would be coated with a glue, made by boiling a deer head and antlers, then wrapped with deer sinews, which were often used as bowstrings. Arrows were made of cane or willow and fletched with eagle feathers.

The animals most often hunted were deer, rabbit, and mountain sheep. Deer were sometimes hunted by starting a fire on the side of a mountain. Frightened by the fire, they would run from it, and hunters, hiding in ambush, shot them as they ran by. Rabbits were hunted with the aid of huge nets made of grass, three feet in height and half a mile in length. A rabbit hunt was held in fall. Nets were arranged in a semicircle, then men a mile away chased the rabbits into the net.

The meat of these animals would be dried, then eaten by itself or mixed with other dietary staples, such as acorn meal, to make a stew. Deer skins were used to make clothing: breechclouts for men and dresses for women. With the coming of cold weather, men added a buckskin shirt and leggings. Rabbit skins were sewn together to make blankets or shawls. A blanket might require as many as 75 or more skins.

The women also played an important part in providing food. It was they who gathered many of the staples of the Indian diet. One of the most important was taboose, a grass found mainly along the banks of creeks. It produced a sweet, pea-sized nut which was eaten raw or ground into flour. To promote growth of taboose, Indians diverted water of Bishop Creek into canals to irrigate spots where the plant was known to grow. Then, in fall, the women would use sticks to dig the nuts from under the earth, where they grew along the plant roots. Gophers also collected taboose, and the women would sometimes supplement their supply by robbing a gopher's hiding place.

Seeds gathered from local plants were also harvested by the Indian women. Plants were beaten with a woven beater, shaped something like a

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(Opposite page, top) Large basket by Wellie Charlie; small one by May James.

(Opposite page, bottom) Dewey Charles, full-blooded Paiute Indian, now residing on the Bishop reservation.

(At right) Beaded baskets

Photos by Jim Stroup

paddle; the seeds were caught in a basket. Because many seeds retained their freshness for long periods, they were stored for use in winter months, when food became scarce. They were often cooked into a mush. Sand grass and a type of cactus called Devil's Pincushion were among the plants that yielded such seeds.

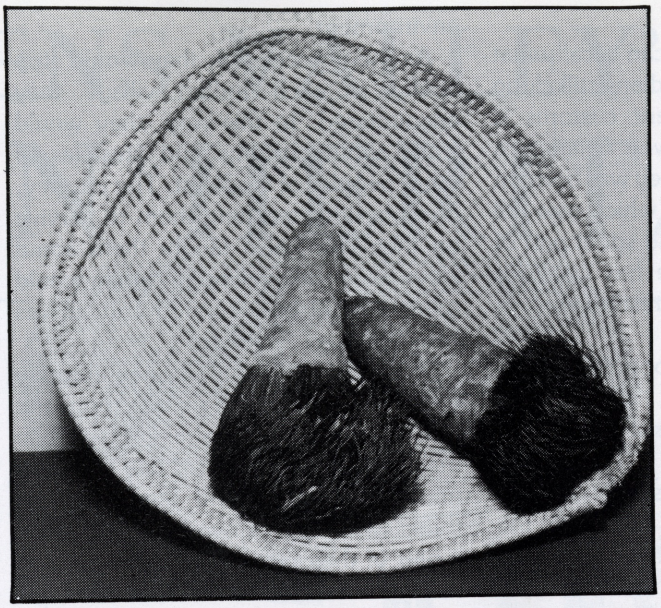
Early fall was the time for harvesting pinenuts, another important Indian food. The first step was to shake pine cones off the trees with a willow pole with a willow hook attached. The cones then had to be dried, either by leaving them in the sun, or by heating. The nuts could then be removed by shaking or crushing the cones. Nuts were removed from their shells by crushing and winnowing in a shallow basket. Some of the nuts were roasted by shaking them in a basket with hot coals. Others were ground into flour.

The pinenut was a versatile food. It could be eaten roasted, ground and mixed with water into a mush. This was heated to make a porridge which was eaten by itself or mixed with meat. It was even frozen into a tasty ice cream.

A favorite food of the Paiutes was a caterpillar, called *piuga*, the larva of the Pandora moth. *Piuga* flourished in the middle of summer each year in the mountains north of the Owens Valley. They fed on the needles of the Jeffrey pine. The Indians went into the mountains at this time each year to gather the larva, which were preserved by drying, then roasted.

If the Indians had a surplus of any foods, they might trade with other Indian tribes for foods not indigenous to this region. *Piuga* was sometimes used as an item of barter, as was salt, which was easily collected from the alkali areas nearby. The Paiutes traded with the Miwoks for such items as manzanita berries and acorns. The berries were used for tea. The acorns, as with pinenuts, would be crushed and winnowed, leeched to remove their bitterness, and ground into flour which was sometimes cooked with rabbit meat to make a stew.

Fish were also a part of the Indian diet, although the trout which are now so plentiful in the area, were not known here until the white men began to stock them in the rivers and lakes. The two indigenous fish were chubs and suckers.



(This page) Basket with brushes used for hair or to clean grinding rocks such as paha or mata.

(Top right) Water jugs, sealed with pine pitch.

(Lower right) Tanuga seed beading basket, used to hit plant to knock seeds loose; the wahu (burden basket) for collecting small seeds.

Photos by Jim Stroup

To catch them, a dam was built across a stream at a time when the water was low. The fish trapped in the dry stream bed below the dam were quickly gathered up.

Indian crafts were related mainly to cooking and transportation of food. Clay pots were used to cook *piuga* and porridge. The practice of pottery began to die out as more white people moved into the Valley, bringing with them modern cooking utensils. It is now a lost art.

Of the art of basket weaving, there are more numerous and more recent examples. It was practiced in winter, when there was less to keep one active. A basket would be tightly woven or loosely twined, depending on its purpose. Baskets were woven with strands of willow. If it was to be used for carrying finer foods, such as seeds and nuts, or for cooking, it would be tightly woven. A water jug would also need a tighter weave, and was made water-tight with pine pitch.

Women's hats were woven, looking something like small, upside-down baskets. The art of weaving is still practiced by a few Indians, but it, too, seems almost a thing of the past.

When there was time for leisure, the Indians enjoyed playing games. Gambling was a popular activity, especially the "hand game." It was played with four sticks made of bone, two marked and two unmarked.

Storytelling was another favorite pastime. Although stories were meant to entertain, they also contained the myths and legends of the people. The characters were usually animals, the most important being Coyote. Coyote was a character common in the myths of Indians throughout California. His role varied from story to story. He could be, at different times, wise or foolish, a figure to be revered or made fun of.

One Shoshone story, in which Coyote figures prominently, concerns the origin of Coso Hot Springs. All the animals decided to have a race from Antelope Valley to Coso, with the losers to be thrown into a fire at Coso. They were divided into two sides, the large against the small. Coyote was the leader of the small animals. The frog was the first one to finish, because of his ability to jump far, so the small animals won. The large animals were all thrown into the fire, and the sun was among them. That is why the waters at Coso are hot to this day: the sun heats them. Eventually, the animals became tired of constant darkness, and wondered how they could get the sun out of the fire. Coyote told them to mourn, so they did. Finally, the sun came out, and the animals could once more go about looking for food.

A Paiute legend concerns Red Mountain, a cinder cone in the volcanic field south of Big Pine. According to the legend, an old woman made her home at the top of the cone. When she became angry, she would make large fires which caused much smoke. Paiute children were warned that if they did not behave, the old woman would throw them into the fire.

Another legend tells the story of the

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80-foot granite pillar in the Inyo mountains north of Independence, called the Paiute Monument. The story says that Owens Valley, stronghold of the Paiutes, was once invaded by Digger Indians. A fierce battle ensued and lasted for several days, but the Paiutes were finally defeated. Winnedumah, a medicine man, fled into the Inyo mountains and sat down to await his brother Tinnemaha, a great warrior, not knowing that he had been killed in battle. As he waited, Winnedumah prayed to the Great Spirit to aid his people. Suddenly, he was turned into a giant pillar of stone, and the accompanying earthquake sent the Diggers running back where they had come from. Winnedumah can still be seen standing guard over the Valley.

Religion among the Indians was a personal matter. They have left no religious monuments, simply because their church, as well as their object of worship, was everywhere around them. They revered the Great Spirit, whom they sometimes called Grandfather, for creating the earth, and they revered Mother Earth for sustaining life. They prayed for a plentiful harvest, and gave thanks for what they were able to gather. Men prayed for strength and courage in the hunt. Religion was not seen as solitary acts of worship, but as an integral part of an Indian's daily life, manifesting in everything he did.

The Indians can thus be seen as the first environmentalists. Because the earth was considered sacred, it was always treated with respect and love. Indians hunted only to sustain life, never for sport. They took from the land only what they needed for survival. The balance of nature was recognized as essential to the healthy survival of all life, including humans.

The Indians, then, lived in harmony with the land, regulating their lives in accordance with the seasons and the availability of food. This way of life proceeded peacefully for several centuries before the coming of the pioneers presaged an end to the peace and quiet of the Valley. The first white visitors to the area posed little threat to the Indians, since they were mostly prospectors with no interest in settling down. It was in the late 1850s that cattlemen began driving their cattle north through the Owens Valley. Despite a few confrontations with hostile Indians who resented what they considered an invasion of their land, no blood was shed.

Then, starting in the latter part of 1861, the stockmen decided to let their herds graze in the Valley instead of driving them further north. That winter was one of the hardest on record; food was scarce for whites and Indians alike. It wasn't long before the Indians, desperate for food, began to raid the cattle herds. Several steers were stolen before an Indian was shot in the act. The Indians took revenge by capturing and killing a white man. Full-scale hostilities were averted at the last minute by a treaty signed by two of the Indian leaders and several of the whites. This turned out to be only a temporary measure, though, because fighting broke out again in February of 1862, and quickly escalated.

The whites went to Aurora to seek help. Eventually, a party of about fifty men set out into the Owens Valley. The Indians, in the meantime, had also received reinforcements from bands of their people to the east, west and south. The two camps finally met in battle at Bishop Creek. The settlers, finding themselves greatly outnumbered, had to retreat south under cover of nightfall.

In late April, the government sent fifty soldiers to aid the settlers. The soldiers finally made contact with the Indians north of Round Valley, and another battle ensued. Outnumbered and poorly commanded, they fared little better against the Indians than the settlers had. They, too, were forced to retreat.

The Indians were now in control of virtually the entire Valley. On July 4,

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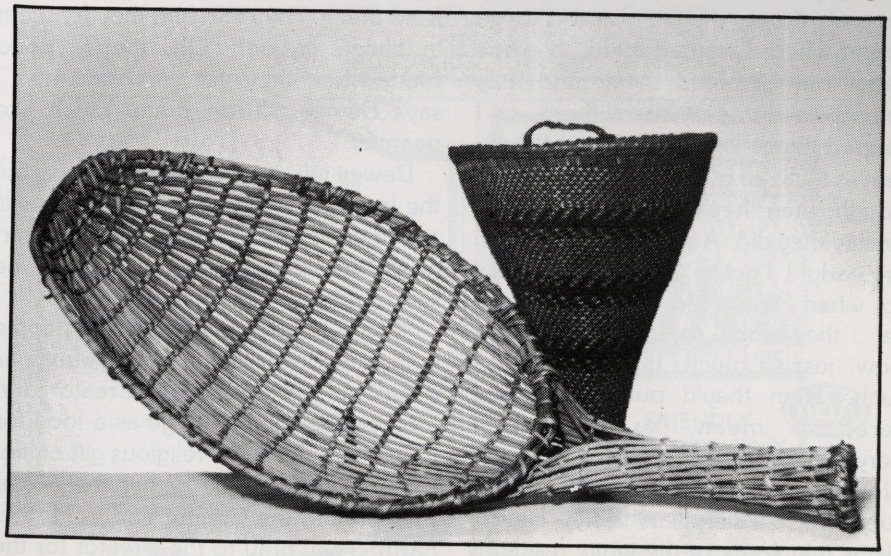

the Army established a fort at what is now Independence. An uneasy peace reigned until March of 1863, when hostilities broke out anew. On April 19th, about thirty-five Indians were killed by soldiers and settlers, at Owens Lake.

At about the same time, another company of soldiers rode south to Keysville, in Kern County. Finding a large group of Indians camped nearby, the soldiers massacred thirty-five unarmed men. This band of Indians had been on friendly terms with the whites.

In June, 400 Indians surrendered at Fort Independence, and were transferred, along with others, to Fort Tejon, near Bakersfield. Sporadic fighting between Indians and whites continued into 1864, becoming ever more bitter. All the while, more white settlements were being established in the Valley. Indian resistance to the increasing white comination became more and more futile, coming to an end after 1870.

Most Indians of Owens Valley now live on four reservations, stretching from Bishop, the largest, in the north, to Lone Pine in the south, with the Independence and Big Pine reservations in between. For the most part, life today follows the pattern of the surrounding white culture. There are not many who still practice, or even remember, the old ways.

Dewey can remember going as a child with his family into the mountains to gather the *piuga*. He says the *piuga* would be put into a hole in the ground about four inches wide and a foot and a half deep. "And there's where they dumped those *piuga*... and I'd go around where I wanted them, to a tree where they gathered them, and they told me to dump them in there, so I dumped them in there. They'd keep them in there so many days, till they got enough, then they'd roast them. That's the way they did. And they'd roast them very early... I got to get up pretty early, too, when I was a kid. There'd be a big fire... they don't roast them all, you know, just so much, that's all, just so much. Then they'd put it here and there, so much, so much, for everybody."

Indians weren't the only ones who found these caterpillars tasty. Dewey relates that some of the white residents

of the area would find out from the Indians when they would be gathering the *piuga*, and then would buy some from them. They told him they fry them in bacon grease. "Oh, they're good food, when they get good and ripe," says Dewey. "Taste pretty much like peanuts."

Dewey tells how religion was a part of the Indian's daily life, even in such acts as the gathering of *piuga*. "*Piuga* is part of our traditional religious culture," he says, and goes on to explain:

"*Piuga* is gathered by Indian people in the traditional Indian way of prayer as it has always been. The Creator and Mother Earth made *piuga* as a food for Indian people. It is a religious gift of life. When Indian people gather the *piuga*, they pray to the Creator and to Mother Earth. They pray to the Creator for the taking of life to sustain life. They pray to Mother Earth for making the *piuga* plentiful. They pray to her to make the Jeffrey pine needles plentiful for the *piuga* to eat. They pray to her to nourish the Jeffrey pine so that the needles will grow back again. And they pray to the Creator to make the *piuga* plentiful in the coming year.

"The use of the *piuga* in our traditional religious culture makes it part of our religion. We will not abandon our religion; life is our religion. The *piuga* given to us by our Creator is consumed to make life. We in return, through our religious process, in taking also give; in this case we give thanks to our Creator and Mother Earth. Life without religion has no place in our culture. Life and religion are one.

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"Mother Earth makes the *piuga* come on in the month of July. They grow four or five inches long; they are fat. When they come down from the trees, they gather around the base of the trees. Indian people gather them up and then roast them in the fire. The *piuga* they make a sound like people crying, but we pray to the Creator and to Mother Earth; they make it right for us to eat the *piuga* in order to carry on life.

"I have always gathered *piuga* all my life, and I pray for them in my traditional Indian way. When I was a small boy, my grandfolks, they teach me the ways of my people, the way our Creator wants it. My grandfolks, they prayed all the time they gathered *piuga*. They roasted the *piuga* and then hung them in sacks with small holes so the *piuga* would not spoil."

When Dewey was a boy, the Indians still traded the *piuga* with the Indians of Yosemite for other foods. The trading usually took place "roundabout August." All the foods that were to be traded would be gathered together, then transported on horseback. "And those Indian people get ready; they know just when they're going over, and then they're ready for them. When we got there, there was Indians there. They want those Indian foods, you know. So they're talkin' around there, and someone always says certain things, you know, and finally they get them. And then they put up the acorn foods to the people, when we go over. And we get plenty to eat, when I was a kid. And that's why they took all these Indian foods to Yosemite."

The trading would be accompanied by a religious ceremony, with dancing and singing to the rhythm of a drumbeat. "And my momma told me, 'Go over and help them sing, and listen to them.' Later, after many songs had been sung, one man would make a prayer, and then there would be a meal. Such festivities continued for some time, then way later, they said they was going to play hand game."

Of the traditional Indian foods, Dewey says, "I still eat *piuga*, acorns, and drink manzanita tea made from the berries."

Dewey can testify to the changes that have taken place in Yosemite since he went there as a child. "At that time, there was nothing but Indians there,

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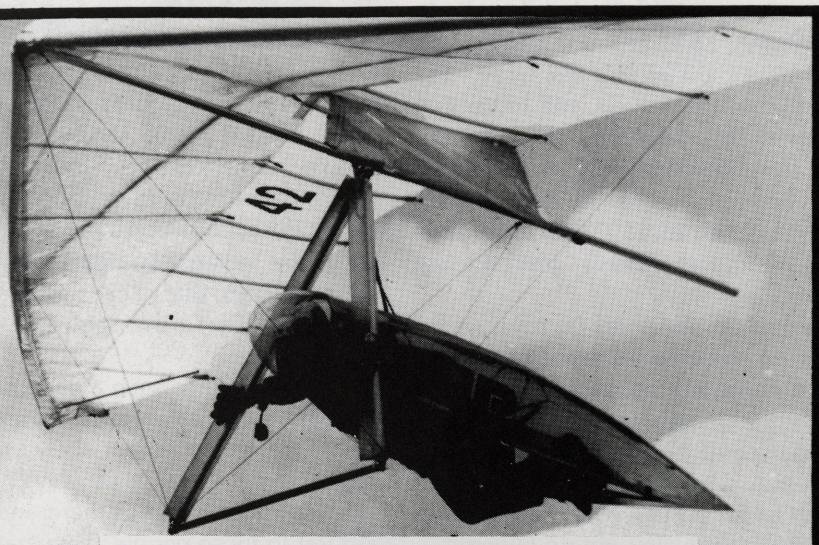

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when I was a kid... there were soldiers camping there, too... but they don't say much about what the Indian people were doing, because the Indian people were making prayers for them, too." He says that in those days, the Indians of Yosemite had what they called a Field Day, featuring trick riding competitions. "But now, seems like there's nothing there now; no more Field Day... now there's nothing there, just a few Indians."

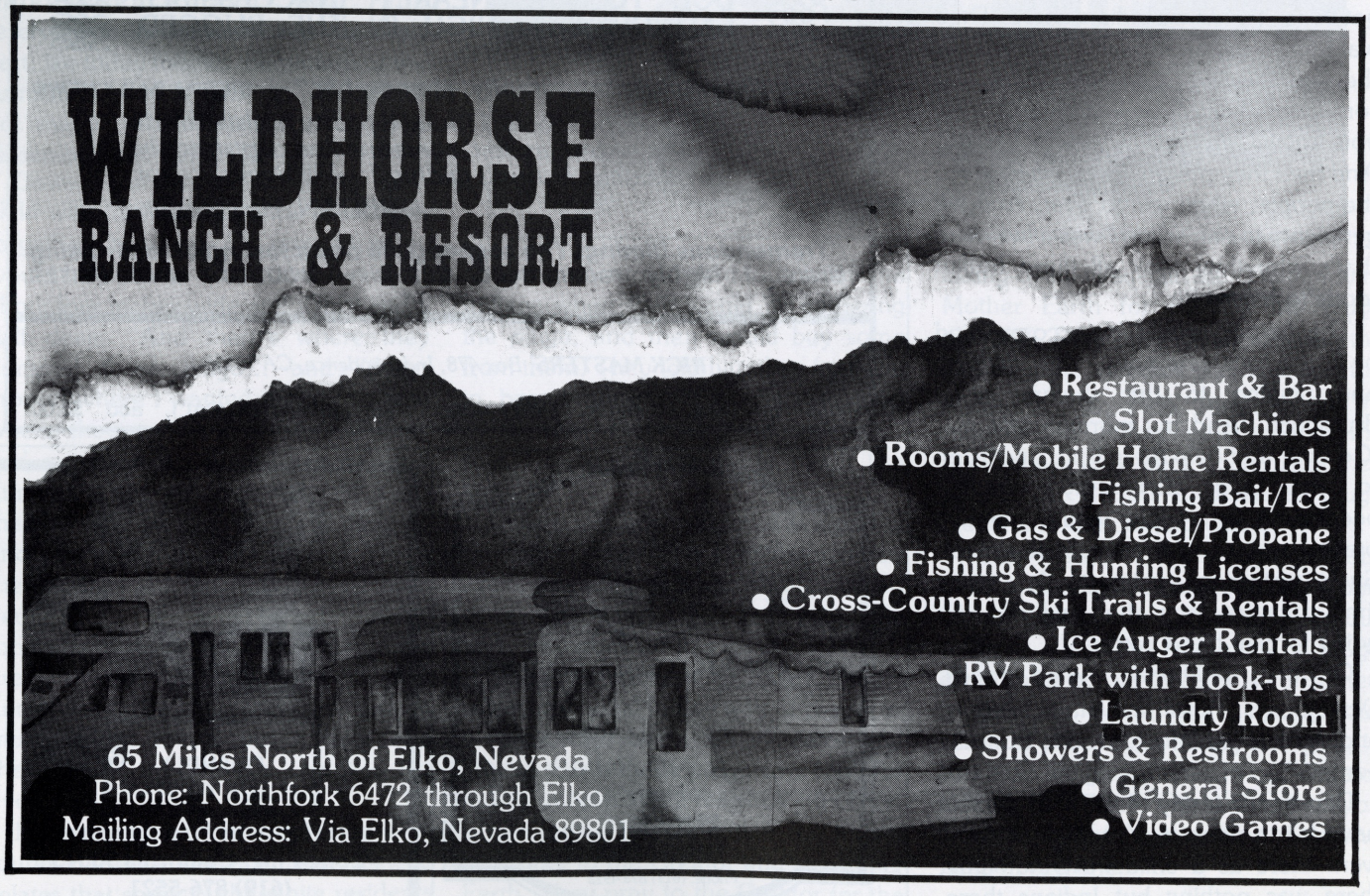
The Indians of Mono, he says, would take their woven baskets to Yosemite to sell to the white people who came to watch the Indian festivities. "Looked like they paid good money, too... that's the reason why more Indians over there make baskets than over here, 'cause over here, they ain't got no buyers."

The waters of Coso Hot Springs were once used by the Indians for healthful purposes; bathing in the mud and drinking the water were considered curative for such ailments as rheumatism and kidney problems. Dewey can remember taking a cousin to Coso for this purpose. "This cousin of mine, you know, he's gonna go in the hole, and they told him to talk. So he's talkin', and by God, the water starts wavin' like it's come to life." This treatment was repeated every day for three days. "And in three days' time, he told me, 'Don't bother me any more. Leave me alone...I'm well now,' he says... By golly, that's good water, that's what I think. Look what the people done to it," meaning the appropriation of the hot springs by the whites for commercial purposes. "By golly, the Indians, by rights, could sue them for doin' that. That's good water, that's life. That's the spirit life of the Indian power."

There was once such a beneficial hot springs near Mammoth Junction. "Indians used to gather there, too, in summertime. I seen that when I was a kid. My mother comes there and visits around to those people. They gather in late afternoon, then one of them starts talkin', and talks to that water, and they all take a bath. That's what I seen. Then look what they done to that, too. They say the people's gonna make more water come up, get more water up, make a hole, drill it, then put dynamite in there, and blast it. That was it, that's all... what these people does, they don't realize. That could maybe be very good today, you know, for the sick people."

Dewey thinks that the loss of these natural resources resulted from the white people's misunderstanding of the Indians' religion. "That's why the white people won't believe the Indians, because they've got the Bible." The whites could never understand, he says, that the Indian's bible is found in the natural world, in the environment. Spiritual happenings were believed to take place in natural phenomena. The spiritual world was not seen as being far removed from the earth, but ever present in it.

Perhaps, as the dangerous effects of pollution become more manifest and land becomes scarcer due to an ever-increasing rate of development, more people will come to see the value in such a religious attitude, which looks at the earth as a sacred thing. Then, perhaps, there will be a greater respect for the Indians and their traditional way of life, and the wish of Numaga, a leader of the Nevada Paiutes in the 1860s, will be fulfilled: "I love my people; let them live; and when their spirits shall be called to the great camp in the southern sky, let their bones rest where their fathers were buried." ∎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Diary of a Country Woman

by Jane Fisher

The skeletons of apple trees twist and grope for the mauve evening sky. I am mesmerized by the black little knobs of the last fruit clinging there and strain to decipher what ancient symbol they recall.

The corn stubble smells pithy and ready to be plowed under, the corn stored in the bins, empty cobs ready for the wood box. Hay stands in great fragrant stacks, and the fruit has dropped from the orchards to dry in trays or sparkle in rows of jars on the cellar shelves. Apple juice filters through a blue stone crock, turning to cider. The best of the Concords have been through the antique wine press and fresh apples and pears are carefully wrapped and cooled.

Only almonds and black walnuts cling to the bare branches of trees that have sent their sap to ground and dropped leaves over it to rest. The stock has been herded into the upper corrals, the barns and fences mended. The earth is ready, and so am I.

From time out of mind I've recognized
the season of the witch.
At ten, I'd known for some long time
that spellbound itch of autumn's
chilly wizardry.
The dusks were heavy with honey and
apples,
pithy with corn in the bins,
and the dark seeped up to a wedge of
high flying geese
in an incandescent sky.

There in the rich, restless nights
the Voices came.

Inextricably linked
with the season of the witch,
seething with passionate craving
to create,
surging with desires and ambitions
unnamed, unripe and unreconciled,
I knew:
I was not a child of Earth
but a waif of the cosmic wilderness
suspended here by as fragile a thread
as the icy constellations
that trembled at the whim of twilight.

Those primeval Voices whispered
too softly to be distinguished
too ancient to be understood.

The wild Sierra wave swept the crest
to ride the canyons,
the steeps loomed over early,
transmutable light in their
lavender deeps
absorbed and reflected by phantoms:
a single flower glowed, down by
the gate,
a shape wavered high in the
chestnut tree.
And then I remembered the taste
of small eggs fried on a hot desert rock;
the pungent musk of exotic melon
sipped with a silver spoon
in a barge on an ancient river.

Sometimes, when the rooster crows
at the wrong time of night,
when the shriek of the coyote pack
back of the river
is oddly muted and whimpering,
when sound and movement still
as the night deepens,
a star falls,
a tree moves,
a breath brushes the face,
and the stars flash faintly in the
reluctant night
that clings to the
throbbing copper of day,

I almost find the clue.

Earth's pains and loves leave little need
to ride out
at the season of the witch.
The apple juice turns to cider,
the muscats to wine,
the kitchen smells all day of spices,
mincemeat and sage.

But I wonder still, who called.
Who called?

I'M HERE, I'M HERE
from Songs of a Country Woman

ACCESS AGREEMENT SIGNED, July 28, 1979 *Photo courtesy of China Lake Naval Weapons Center*

COSO HOT SPRINGS

from spiritual center to energy source . . .

by Anne Duffield

From a distance, Coso Hot Springs appears as a red-orange smudge on a landscape of browns and grays. In the middle of the smudge, steam rises from more than 40 fumeroles and seasonal ponds clustered along a shelf-like fault scarp. Thin wisps of steam rising into the hot dry air of summer become gusty plumes in the colder days of winter. To the west looms the Sierra Nevada; to the east, the dark peaks of the Argus Range.

Closer, the colorful smudge becomes eerily beautiful, despite the awesome power that fires volcanoes and moves tectonic plates. There's a constant, gentle hissing, and the air is tangy with sulfur. The same hydrothermal activity that changed the normally tan rock to shades of red and yellow has rotted and weakened it, leaving a broken, crusty surface that crumbles easily underfoot and seems to breathe steam from every pore. Big yellow signs surround the steaming ground, warning of its dangers. Pools of slick gray-green mud bubble and burp. Miniature canyons, only inches deep, reach out into the desert. Carved by boiling rivulets, their color-streaked walls are festooned with the drip-castles of deposited minerals. Downwind, the ground glistens with a sugary-white sprinkling where the components of similar minerals were carried dissolved in steam and deposited.

Not too many people get to Coso Hot Springs today. It has been locked inside the fences surrounding the China Lake Naval Weapons Center since 1943. A lonely cluster of abandoned, crumbling buildings was once a health spa; nearby are petroglyphs left by much earlier visitors. Scientific apparatus, gauges and wires, attest to ongoing research projects. The story of Coso Hot Springs is the story of the many varied uses of geothermal energy made by different people in different times.

The dun-colored peaks of the Coso Range surround the Springs, part of the Basin and Range geologic province that stretches eastward from the Sierra Nevada. About four million years ago, faulting began to transform what was then a rolling plain to the series of sharply-faulted mountain ranges separated by deep basins characteristic of the region today. Molten magma erupted on the surface of the faulted block we call the Coso Range, adding a relatively thin volcanic cap to the underlying granitic mass.

continued on next page ...

***Coso Hot Springs** continued*

Just why magma erupted here, and in other similarly isolated spots, is not clearly understood by geologists. Recent volcanism occurred at Coso, just to the north near Independence, and further north at Long Valley. All three sites are adjacent to the eastern face of the Sierra, suggesting a relationship with the system of faults that produced that steeply-uplifted scarp.

The Coso Range is a young volcanic range. The sparse vegetation typical of the Upper Mojave makes the geologic features easy to see, even by the casual passer-by on Highway 395. Rusty-red cinder cones stand on cliffs of black basalt, and lava flows drape the sides of sharp peaks. Potassium argon dating gives an age of about 40,000 years to the most recent lavas at Coso. Whenever the last surface eruption took place, it was "recent" in geologic terms and reservoirs of molten magma almost certainly remain, providing the heat for Coso Hot Springs.

Water serves as the carrier to bring subterranean heat to the surface; faults and fissures provide the routes. Coso Hot Springs receives barely 12 centimeters of precipitation annually; isotopic studies of the water there suggest that it comes from the Sierra. Seeping eastward at depth, it meets the heated rock surrounding the magma reservoir and is itself heated. Now less dense, it rises through the fault systems. Further from the heat source, some water cools and moves laterally before its increasing density causes it to sink again, perhaps to repeat the cycle and thus creating a hydrothermal convection system. Other water boils as the pressure decreases nearer the surface and feeds Coso's fumeroles. This steam represents the relatively small amount of thermal energy that escapes from this natural system. About 80 percent resides in the magma-heated rock, and the rest in the convecting subsurface water.

People have lived in this area for at least 10,000 years. Certainly such a wondrous place, where the earth steamed and ponds boiled must have attracted the very earliest residents. Paiute and Shosone people felt Coso to be a very spiritual place: a special area owned by no one, sharing its power with all. Their modern descendents maintain a high regard for Coso Hot Springs, and many make periodic visits by special arrangement with the Naval Weapons Center.

The sick and ailing were brought here, to drink the strangely flavored waters and to burrow into the warm, soothing mud. Each colored pool was believed to have its own powers, and green ones were avoided as poisonous. Shallow pits were dug at the edges of mud ponds, placed to achieve just the right temperature. The patient crawled in, soaking away aches and pains as the "shaman" chanted magic words. Small huts were built over fumeroles for steam baths, too, but mud was believed to have more power. Healing herbs were collected around the pond's edges and medicines prepared, such as the liniment made by boiling a creosote bush in Coso water.

The healthy came too, for the feeling of well-being this sacred place gave them. The Paiute and Shoshone were reportedly nomadic, traveling in small kinship groups and following the plants and animals in their seasons. Most likely, family groups paused while Grandmother eased her arthritis and the medicine man collected his herbs.

Special rites were necessary before entering such a place, and the routes into the valley glitter with countless obsidian chips carried here and used in these rites. There is evidence that Coso's fame was widespread. Elderly residents of the area mention that, during their childhood, there were visitors at the Springs speaking unintelligible languages.

Explanations were needed for the phenomena of the boiling springs, colored earth and bubbling mud. One myth tells how Coyote grew so angry with Sun that he threw him into the pond, which is why it is hot today and why gleaming yellow pieces of Sun can still be seen around its edges.

The small scattered Indian groups had the area to themselves until the middle of the 19th century. Joseph Walker led a party of trappers through the Owens Valley in 1834, but the harsh deserts did not encourage exploration and settlement. A survivor of the Death Valley party of 1849 claimed to have found silver, though, and the legend of the Lost Gun Sight

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BOTTLING WORKS AND GUEST ROOMS *Photo courtesy of China Lake Naval Weapons Center*

Mine was born. Soon hopeful prospectors were poking around.

One expedition did find silver. Gold was also discovered, and booming mining camps sprang up in a brief flurry of growth. In 1860, M.H. Farley, a miner at nearby Silver Peak, mentioned "hot, boiling springs" to the south, the first written reference. Maps in the 1880s indicated hot springs, but the name "Coso" (variously hot or burning in Shoshone) didn't appear officially until 1902 when it was used in a California State Mining Bureau report.

Coso Hot Springs quickly became popular with the miners. It enjoyed a reputation for its ability to "sober them up," and to cure anything from "constipation to VD." Sniffing the sharp fumes, it's easy to believe the water's reputed powers.

Ranchers soon followed the prospectors. Accounts of early ranching are sketchy at best, but the first claim filed on the Springs in 1893 used "the old stone corral" as a reference point. Cattle and sheep were wintered here. Grass came a little earlier in spring, and a cowboy must have appreciated warming his hands, and perhaps his coffee pot as well, in the warm steam on a cold January morning.

The increased aridity following the construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct, combined with the overgrazing that destroyed the fragile bunchgrasses, produced a dramatic change in the flora at Coso. Looking at the area today, it's hard to envision the hundreds, even thousands, of animals said to have been wintered there. Now only a thin scattering of the hardiest desert plants, dominated by the creosote bush, remain. Range cattle are allowed in the area, by permit of the Naval Weapons Center, but the lack of grass attracts very little domestic stock. The few cattle there must now compete with the hardier mustangs and burros.

Dr. I.J. Woodin of Independence filed the first claim to the mineral water and deposits at Coso Hot Springs in 1893. He considered developing the area as a health spa, but nothing came of his plans. Commercial development had to wait for improved transportation.

Transportation did improve, and by 1914, Frank Adams was operating a camping resort near Coso Hot Springs, featuring a store for supplies, a showerhouse, and tent cabins--even mail service. Early clients must have been a hardy lot. Some braved primitive roads on their own. Others came by rail to Little Lake, 15 miles away, then endured an all-day wagon ride to the Springs. There are tales of clients who arrived so weak they had to be carried; after a few days of the "Coso Cure," they were able to *walk* back to Little Lake. Was it the water, one wonders, or the thought of repeating that bone-jolting wagon ride, costing $7, that inspired their cure?

Resort activity at Coso reached its peak during the 1920s and 30s. Highway 395 was paved and the Auto Club erected an enormous sign at Coso Junction directing travelers. More guest houses were built. Pits, lined with wood or concrete, were dug into the edge of the great pond for mud bathing. Steamhouses were built over existing fumeroles, and more holes were conveniently punched where desired--they usually needed to be only six or seven meters deep. Like the Paiute and Shosone, the resorts used the springs for cooking as well as bathing.

Two stone buildings dominate the Springs. One, known as "The Castle," served as a hotel. The other housed a restaurant, store and gathering room featuring a huge, arrowhead-studded fireplace.

Coso water and mud were packaged for shipment, too. Brilliantly labeled containers of mud boasted:

> "Mother Earth's Remedy
> Coso Hot Springs Volcanic Mud
> Beautifies the Entire Body, Purges the Pores. Arouses Circulation. Removes Inflammation and Makes the Skin Live and Breath with New Life."

Even more was claimed for Coso water:

> "America's Wonder. Coso Volcanic Mineral Water is a vitalizing blood builder which aids digestion, destroys invading bacteria and is especially recommended in cases of Gastritis, Stomach and Intestinal Catarrh. The water acts directly upon the liver and kidneys, thus eliminating toxic water, the neglect of which so often causes nervousness, high blood pressure and rheumatism."

But Coso water didn't travel well and lost its "healing power" on the trip to Los Angeles. That is one reason given for the ending of the venture; another is that the government, appalled by its mercury content, forbade it. Believers continued to bottle their own "sour volcanic water" at the source, however, being sure to include a dollop of red mud in each bottle.

People were said to have come to Coso from all over California--even all over the world. There were probably never more than 50 or 60 people at any one time, though, and the resorts were never a great economic success. There are rumors of movie stars and famous people who came, but just who, and when, is vague. The entire commercial operation ceased in 1943 with the establishment of the Naval Weapons Center, and the quiet years began.

In the early 1970s, increasing interest in alternative energy sources brought people to Coso again, this time geologists and geophysicists. The U.S. Geological Survey, government, naval and university scientists began studies to determine Coso's potential for the geothermal production of electricity.

During field mapping geologists identified rock types, traced fault systems, and collected rocks for age dating. Many of Coso's volcanoes proved to be rhyolitic, an encouraging sign. Geologists believe that rhyolite tends to form the magma chambers needed to power geothermal systems, more so than other volcanic rock types. The conclusions drawn from this study led to a hypothesized rhyolitic magma body beneath the Coso volcanic field.

A variety of geophysical studies suggests that the magma body lies at least eight kilometers beneath the surface, overlain by a hydrothermal convection system. Commercial development taps into such a system, drawing off thermal energy before returning the water to depth to be reheated. By drilling into the system, heat may be drawn off at a much faster rate than escapes from a natural system.

Coso's famous water has been analyzed. Its chemistry indicates that temperatures as great as 250 degrees Centigrade can be expected at depth, and that the system is hot-water rather than vapor-dominated. Of these two

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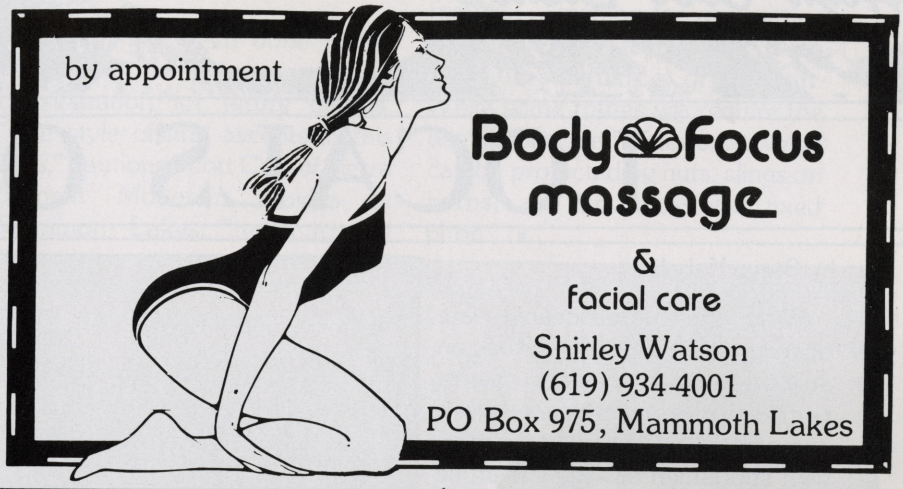
principal types of hydrothermal systems, hot-water systems such as Wairakei in New Zealand and California's Salton Trench are more common. Vapor-dominated systems as found in California and Larderello, Italy geysers are rarer but more desirable. The steaming fumeroles at Coso Hot Springs rise from the small vapor cap believed to overlie the large hot-water system.

Compilation of the data collected produced a picture of the probable size and temperature of the Coso system. Based on these data, the U.S.G.S. assessed Coso's energy potential at 650,000 kilowatts, roughly sufficient for the energy needs of a city of 650,000 residents. Not a national panacea, certainly, but a valuable contribution.

A site was selected in a fault zone a few kilometers southwest of Coso Hot Springs, and drilling began. Deference to the beliefs of the local Paiute and Shoshone people prevented drilling at the Springs itself. On December 23, 1981, the well struck steam, and on January 22, 1982, the well was flow-tested. Its valves were opened and a plume of steam shot from the desert, delighting scientists and drillers alike. Samples were collected for further study, and other wells are currently being drilled nearby. Coso shows real possibilities as a commercial energy producer.

The Springs are today the site of geothermal research projects in anticipation of commercial development. At one test site, Coso's mineral-rich water is trickled through a system of shallow troughs of different materials, to test the resistance of each to corrosion. Elsewhere, existing fumeroles are monitored to see what effect nearby drilling and perhaps later production will have on the existing system. Geothermal development in the desert poses some very special problems, and care must be taken not to pump the system dry.

The possibility of generating electricity is the most recent chapter in the continuing exploitation of Coso's energy. For hundreds of years, people came here, to the source. Perhaps one day, energy from Coso will be taken to them. ∎



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LOCALS ONLY

by Steve Kabala

With the unseasonably late opening of the Tioga Pass Road on July 4, most Eastern Sierra recreational activities were comparatively slow out of the gate, with sportsmen braving sub-arctic spring conditions to get the ball rolling.

Eastern Sierra climbers began preparations for the season by systematically exploring the Owens Valley — discovering and ascending new areas in anticipation of the day when the pass to Yosemite would clear, and allow new route development on National Park territory.

Bouldering in the Buttermilks ranged afield to the adjacent crags and bluffs. First to receive attention was the Windy Wall, on the backside of the same formation ascended by *Wavelength*. The *Cayenne Pepper* route is a moderate, bolt-protected face line, while the nearby *Dr. Zime* offers up hard hand crank.

Some controversy is associated with *Freedom of Choice*. This 80-foot 5.11 was evidently top-roped, then bolted on rappel, and finally led free. So far no one is complaining, as the steep spire, southeast of Picnic Valley, has yet to see a repeat.

Face lines were also found at Little Egypt, on Bishop Creek. *Buttermilk Pancakes* ascends steep "lizard skin" flakes, and plates, so characteristic of the bouldering arena of the same name and vicinity.

A chance discovery led to the rapid and categorical development of a craggy granite ridge, north of Bishop, titled tentatively "Secret Area 1A," later referred to euphemistically as the New Area. Activity here was fierce, with almost 100 new routes established on mostly superb rock of up to 300 feet in height.

For those who enjoy steep face climbing on solid edges, the New Area offers an early season alternative to the marginal skiing available locally prior to summer. Many pitches are quality, moderately graded adventures on or through sculpted knobs, cracks, and corners at a 5.6-5.9 standard. Harder routes include *Competitive Edge*, on Sports Challenge Wall; *Neanderthal*, in the Oldavi Gorge; and the tubular *Surfin' Safari*, on

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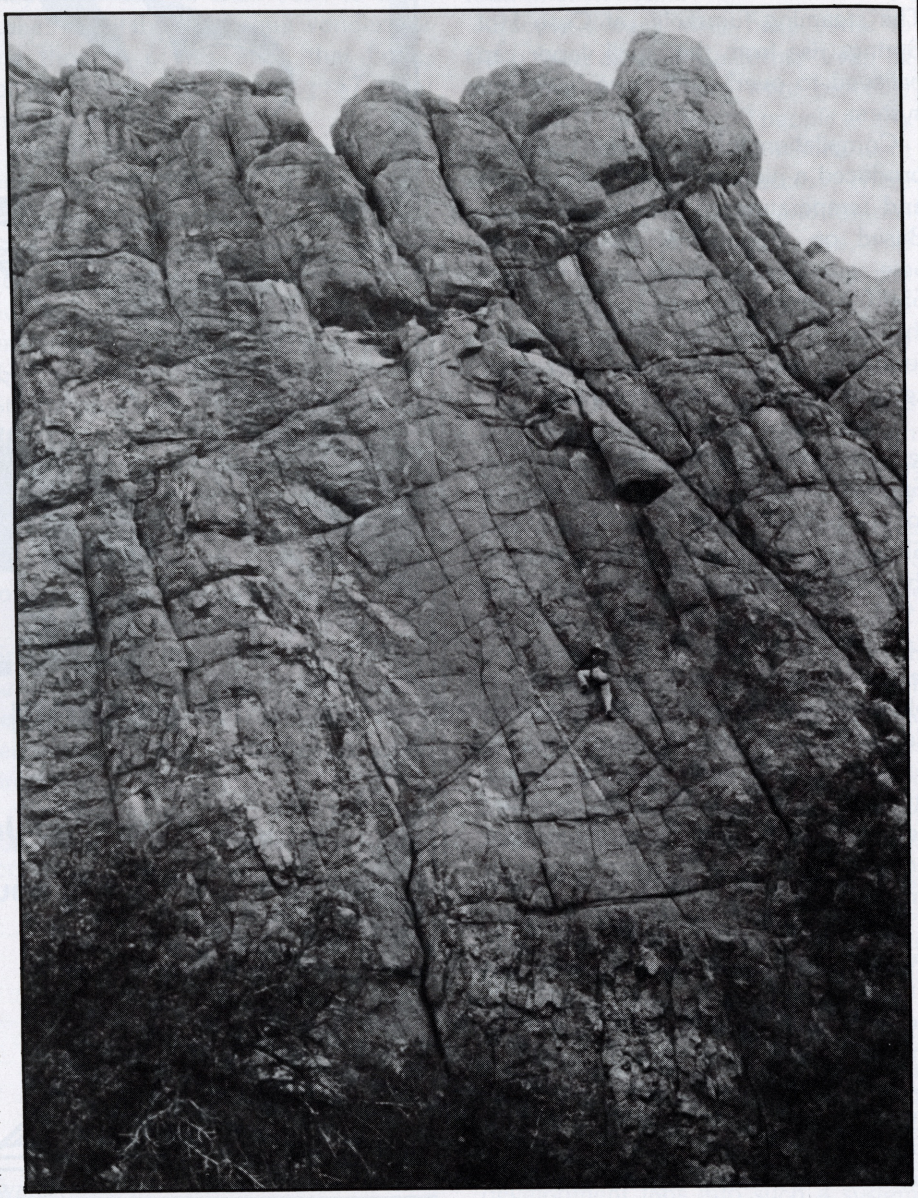


"Surfin' Safari" Photo by Errett Allen

Locals Only Rock. Currently, one of the more touchy problems, at a 5.11 standard, is the *Australopithicus Roof.* Exploration of this area is one of contextural respect for the hunting implements and petroglyphs which remain as archaeological reminders of our predecessors.

Speaking of predecessors, one of the great mysteries which faced the climbers of the New Area from the onset was the discovery of an old rappel sling below, and east, of the summit of Locals Only. This area was believed to have been inviolate, until the discovery of this gear. To date, this is the only sign that previous climbers had been through.

Some light was shed on this dilemma by Bishop resident Bob Harrington. Apparently he was one of a very few pioneers who had done a route or two in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, no traces of prior ascents were found on any of the routes which were done this summer. There are also a number of lines which still await a first ascent.

Enough has been done in the region to define some ethical consideration for future parties. "The style of first ascents in this area," cautions Scott Cole of Sierra Summit Mountain Guides in Mammoth Lakes, "tends toward the use of RP's, small wired's and friends — making for committing climbing on steep rock with sometimes scarce protection. While some routes will require the use of bolts, many lines exist which can be protected by nuts, slings on horns, and an occasional fixed piton." ■

Errett Allen on Locals Only. Photo by Scott Cole

SPORT NOTES
How did you do in 1983?

Photo by Martin Stelneck

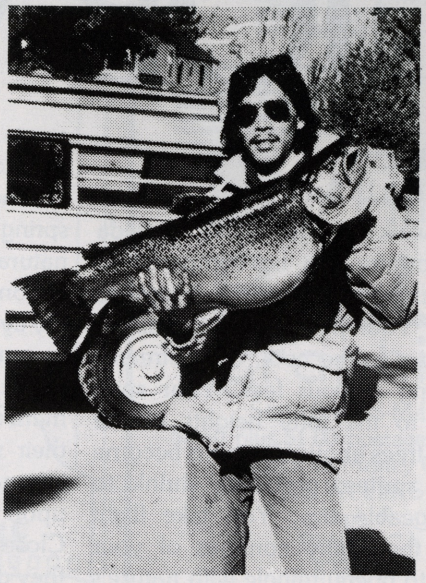
189 pounds

This six-point buck, field dressed at 189 pounds, was taken by John Mitchell of Bishop on September 27, in the Furnace Creek area near the White Mountains in Inyo County. This was the largest deer taken in the Inyo-Mono area for 1983.

26 pounds 5 ounces.

This brown trout catch by Jon Minami of Carson, CA, now holds the state record, replacing the one set in 1971 at Crowley Lake of 25 lbs. 11 oz. An eight-inch Rapalla lure spelled doom for this lunker, caught at Lower Twin Lakes outside of Bridgeport, on Saturday, May 7 at approximately 6 a.m.

Photo by John Garrigues



Photos courtesy of ***Sierra Daily News***

A JOB WELL DONE

by Krenn L. Scott

A walk in the Sierra Nevada backcountry can be compared to awakening from a deep, dreamless sleep. Your perspective is washed as clean as the cool, clear streams skipping at your feet. Your spirit soars to the lofty heights of the noble trees above. Demons become elfish sprites; problems shrink to manageable size. You take flight from the fleshy confines of your body to briefly mingle with nature's most precious gift to you, the backcountry.

When winter's pale sun becomes spring's warming rays, I take this natural prescription often.

On one of these rejuvenating walks, my eyes follow the skyward spiral of a gaunt, grey aspen. Crowds of them huddle together like lean old men. A pool of still water chokes their submerged roots. Those too internally weakened to stand, rest upon the water in random patterns. Close by, sharp stumps look as if they'd been thrust into a giant's pencil sharpener.

The creatures that altered this landscape are not large and imposing, but modest and purposeful. They are beavers.

Beavers, like man, possess the unique ability to change and control their environment. Before the dawn of history, the beaver had a more profound impact upon its natural surroundings than did man. Their industry generated the well-used descriptive phrases, "eager beaver" and "busy as a beaver."

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(Opposite page)
Beavers have turned this forest into a lake.
Photo by Jim Stroup
Illustration by Russ Boston

The beavers that created this comical forest of stumps did so because the aspen provides the balance of their food and the bulk of their building material. Beavers often work co-operatively. The first worker bites into the chosen tree twice and peels off the bark from the space between the notches. They take turns whittling away at the wood, and when the unpredictable tree falls, they race for the water. The prize is shorn of branches, then dragged, rolled or floated down beaver-made canals to the appropriate site. A beaver can cut down a four-inch sapling in fifteen minutes. The largest known tree felled by this tenacious rodent had a 5'7" diameter and stood 110 feet tall!

Signs of their constant toil lie all about me. Woodchips, thick and dry as fall leaves, cover the earth and create a trail to the dam. A tangle of twigs, mud and stones, the curved beaver dam serves as a model for man's concrete structures. The tips of the largest poles lean in the direction of the current flow for maximum strength.

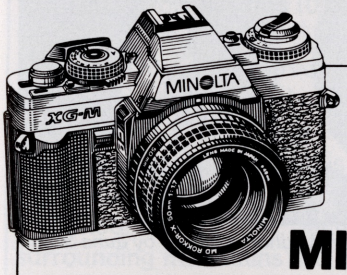
Beavers always finish their dams, which is commendable since some are thousands of feet long and can reach up to a mile in length. The dams, constantly maintenanced, last for years, impounding pools that can cover many acres. Because silt and solid debris cannot escape, beaver areas ultimately bloom into verdant meadows.

Dams are built to restrain a protective lake in which the beaver colony can construct its safe island lodge. Shaped like a rude teepee, the lodge sits far from my vantage point. I follow the pond's watery border; my feet make deep, wet hollows in the damp earth. The domed lodge appears deserted; beavers are more active at night because the constant threat of enemies decreases. The family, consisting of two adults and two sets of progeny, is safe within the dry, spacious interior. Two submerged tunnels lead in and out of the chamber. An extra exit allows the beavers to escape a swimming predator, such as the mink. The mud, which cements the branches and rocks together, freezes during the winter, rendering the lodge hard and impenetrable.

Like their human counterparts, beavers are kept inside by winter weather. They make frequent forays to the pond bottom to dredge up stored food. A probable combination of cabin fever and instinct prompts the lifetime partners to mate in midwinter. Spring heralds a birth of two to eight kits.

If the lodge becomes overcrowded, a few of the beavers have the good sense to move to a new location. I have encountered strings of dammed pools, dark as onyx beads, while walking in the backcountry.

As I admire the deft engineering skill of the beavers, the pool grows inky beneath my gaze. Diffuse patches of pink and orange fill the liquid with opalescent fire. The sun has already been halved by a purple wall of mountain. To those who listen, the backcountry offers its subtle lessons. I will remember the perfection and the peace of the beaver domain. ■



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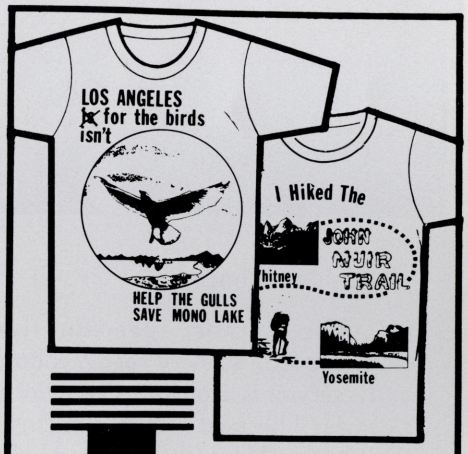

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WILDHORSE

Remains of Rio Tinto School near Wildhorse. Photo by June Stone

by June Stone

The serene, peaceful and unspoiled scenery at Wildhorse Reservoir is a joy for all eyes and all ages. The best summer fishing is between Memorial Day and Labor Day; as fishing year-round is legal, ice-fishing in winter is very popular.

The lake is located in northern Nevada, 65 miles north of Elko on Nevada State Highway 225, and 25 miles south of the Idaho border. The elevation is 6,205 feet, and the high-mountain air is pure. Seven miles of shoreline provide a variety of campsites, most of which boast not only a lake view but also a mountain view.

Wildhorse is surrounded by nearby mountains to the north, east and west. To the south are a few dozen summer homes and year-round residences in a relatively flat area.

Of the several points of land and open camping areas scattered along the shoreline, New Point and Dock Point are the largest.

New Point, about half a mile east of the dam, is one of the most modern of the lakeside campgrounds. It has an asphalt loop roadway with paved camping pads, picnic tables and barbeques, two central restrooms and RV holding tank disposal facilities.

Dock Point is located a quarter mile due east of New Point, and is typical of the remaining open camping areas near the shoreline in that the only improvement is one restroom building. The ground cover is low sagebrush-stubble and packed dirt, with a beach of coarse sand at the water's edge. There are no paved parking pads, and vehicles are permitted to park anywhere. Some camp at the shoreline beside their boats; others prefer the higher elevations overlooking the lake.

Every weekend, vacationers may be found ranging from the huge fifth-wheeler RVs and large motorhomes of the retired

continued on next page ...

travelers to the tents of the "roughing it" and usually younger campers.

Boats at the lake come in many sizes and shapes, too, from the fast 20-foot ski boats with inboard engines, to the 10-foot Jon boats with small electric or outboard motors. A few sailboats brave the breezes, and although a rare sight, so occasionally does a houseboat.

Visitors from many states travel to Wildhorse, where many forms of relaxation are available to young and old alike. Fishing is popular, as is water skiing. The youngsters splash happily along the shoreline. But many travelers visit just to rest and enjoy the serene beauty and tranquility. Constantly changing cloud formations create and reflect the many moods of the lake for the vacationing photographer.

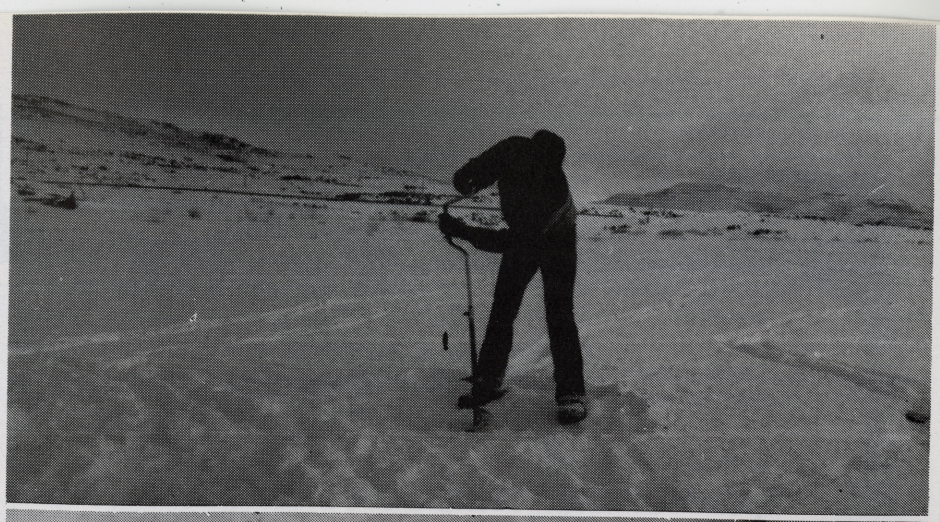
According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department, the avid fisherman may catch rainbow, brown and bowcut trout, kokanee (a landlocked salmon), bass, shiners, and squawfish from the shore or from a boat. The largest fish on record caught in the reservoir weighed 10 pounds and was 28 inches long.

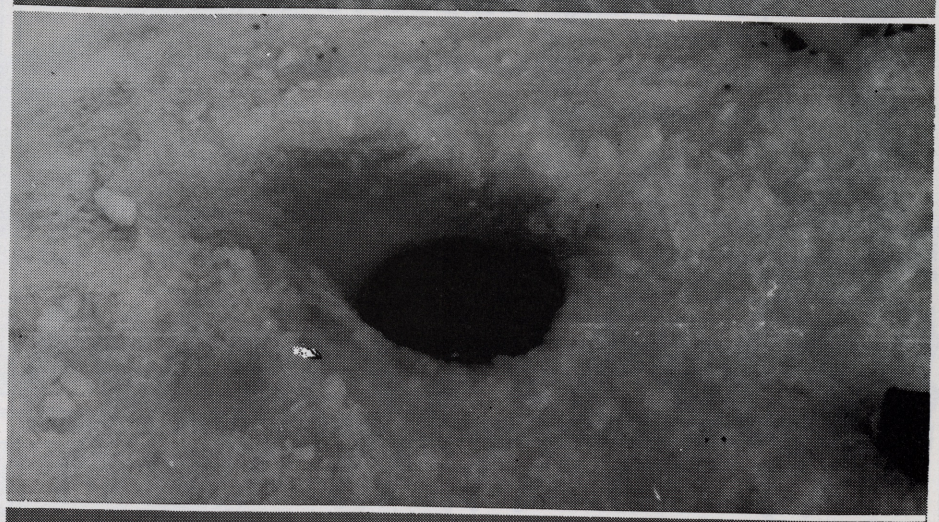
The 2,930-acre reservoir is backed up behind a concrete dam which was built in 1969. The dam is 90 feet high above the stream bed and is of double curvature, thin-arch construction.

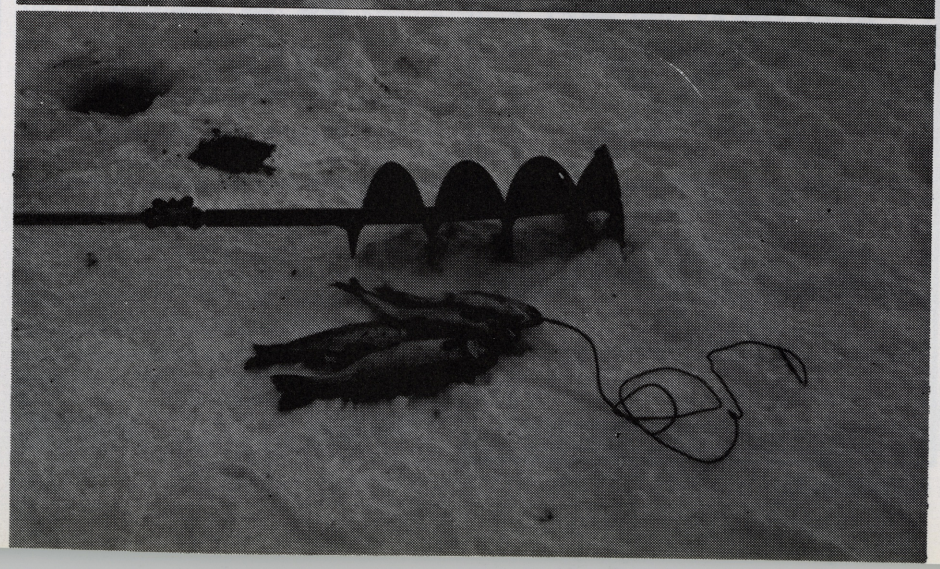
Remote from the lake in the surrounding mountains are mule deer, beaver, otter, mountain lion, ground squirrels and many other small animals. For the true flavor of the old west, the coyotes howl frequently from the foothills. Sometimes they sing their song at midnight; other times it may be a sunrise serenade.

During a stay at Wildhorse, the early-bird photographer with a little patience should be able to capture on film one of the lake's finest displays — a glorious dawning, color-saturated and reflected in the mirrored stillness of the water.

Bring your binoculars! For the bird-watchers there are seagulls, mallards, coots, snowy egrets, blue herons, Canadian geese, golden eagles, hawks, owls, sage grouse, chukkar, partridge,







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Ice augers may be rented at the Ranch & Resort; fishing licenses, bait and friendly advice are also available.

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***Wildhorse** continued*

and horned larks.

The rocky outcroppings on the mountains near Wildhorse and on the walls of the Owyhee River Canyon below the dam are rhyolite, a shallow flow volcanic rock of the Tertiary age.

Interesting side trips may be taken to the Rio Tinto Mine, 13 miles, and Mountain City, 19 miles, via the State Highway.

Rio Tinto, now a tiny ghost town, had its heyday from the early '30s to the late '40s. The copper mine was rich and in full production for 15 years. The walls and front stairway of the Rio Tinto School still stand, and provide a hauntingly beautiful photographic subject — especially with early morning sun and shadows. Other than a small dwelling or two, and a few crumbling foundations, little else remains to give evidence of the once-bustling company town.

Mountain City is 19 miles north of the lake. Although small, it is the nearest shopping center and has two general stores, a restaurant, a post office, a gas station and two bars. Original boardwalks and rustic false-front buildings should guarantee Mountain City a place on your must-see list.

Elko, 65 miles south of the reservoir, has three large gambling casinos, colorful and fun to visit. There are many choices of activities to occupy your leisure time such as floor shows, exquisite restaurants, horseback riding, winter skiing, deer hunting in season, golf and tennis. Four days of horse racing is held in conjunction with the County fair on Labor Day weekend.

While in Elko, don't miss the opportunity to visit the award-winning Northeastern Nevada Museum. It has outstanding professional exhibits; open daily and admission is free.

Archie and Betty Corbari own and operate the Wildhorse Ranch and Resort at the southern tip of the reservoir. Full facilities are offered, including RV hookup drive-thru spaces, a restaurant and bar, mobile home rentals, boat rentals, and much more. The resort also has a private airstrip adjacent to the lake for small planes.

Visit Wildhorse Reservoir on your next trip to Nevada. You will enjoy a high mountain paradise, whatever your interests. ■

Merriam's Chipmunk. Photo by Enid A. Larson ©1983

Merriam's Chipmunk on Palo Escrito

Author Enid A. Larson

MERRIAM'S CHIPMUNK ON PALO ESCRITO, an observational field study by Enid A. Larson, is the first of three volumes culminating an intensive twenty years (1957-1978) of field study of a single species. The study location was in the Sierra de Salinas, at the northern extremity of the Santa Lucia Mountains of Monterey County, California.

The results of Ms. Larson's study are presented in three parts. Part I, currently in print, deals with the chipmunk's regimen, its growth and development, and its daily and seasonal activities. The forthcoming Part II will portray Merriam's chipmunk as an individual in relation to its immediate environment, the oak-woodland habitat. In Part III, the author outlines behavioral patterns, intraspecific social relations, and changes in population numbers during the entire study period.

Part I includes eight selected photographs taken by the author which serve as excellent plates for a close-up look at the species. Appropriate tables and graphs are also included, along with excellent pen and ink drawings by Dian R. Mawby. But perhaps that which is most revealing to the biological accuracy, and thus the marvelous nature, of this work is found in the Compendium. It is here that the reader can grasp the full significance of Ms. Larson's keen observational talent, the key value of this publication.

We would strongly suggest that these works be added to the libraries of all secondary schools, colleges and universities. Individuals with interests in animal behavior, particularly those who are just beginning a career, should consider using these volumes as a model to follow in their investigations.

Parts I, II and III may be ordered by contacting North Country Publishing, 699 West Line St., Bishop, CA 93514.

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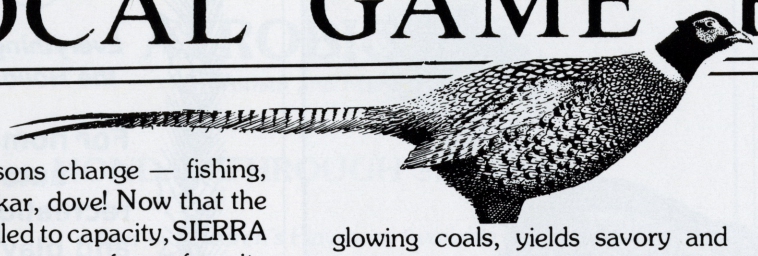

The seasons change — fishing, deer, chukkar, dove! Now that the freezer is filled to capacity, SIERRA LIFE offers some of our favorite recipes for that High Sierra bounty.

CLARK LAKE TROUT BALLS

An unusual and tasty appetizer, this dish is equally at home in deer-hunt camps or formal cocktail parties. A special recipe from Dorothy, of Dink Getty's Frontier Pack Train, June Lake.

6 pan-size trout
1 pkg. (about 40) saltine crackers, crushed
1 cup grated longhorn style Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup green onions, minced
2 large eggs, beaten
3 tblsp. lemon juice
1/8 tsp. garlic salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
4 tblsp. butter, melted
1 cup cornmeal
1 cup butter-flavored shortening

Steam trout until you can peel meat away from bones easily, about 15-20 minutes. Remove skin, fins and bones. You should have about 4 cups of flaked trout. Combine fish with crackers, cheese, onions, garlic salt and pepper. Mix lemon with beaten eggs and melted butter. Add this to fish mixture and mix well. Roll one-inch diameter balls from mixture. Roll the trout balls in cornmeal, and fry in skillet until golden brown. Or drop balls into a deep fryer and cook until golden brown. Makes about 30 one-inch diameter trout balls.

VENISON STEAKS WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE

The Dutch oven, buried in glowing coals, yields savory and easy meals for the camper. Jennifer Ketchum of McGee Creek Pack Station, shares this recipe with us. Dutch oven cooking is a specialty on McGee Creek pack trips. Wintertime at-home cooking with the Dutch oven is about the same (set oven at 300), but cooking time is generally longer.

2 lbs. venison steak
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 large can mushrooms, or 1 lb. fresh mushrooms, thickly sliced
flour, salt and pepper
1/4 cup oil or shortening

While the coals burn down to an amber glow, prepare the steaks: cut off extra fat and gristle, salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle flour on the steaks, then pound with the blunt end of a butcher knife until all flour is incorporated. Turn over and repeat for other side. Level the Dutch oven over the coals, pour in the oil, and when hot, brown steaks on both sides. Cover the Dutch oven and mound some coals on top. Simmer at least one-half hour. To the mushroom soup, add one-half can milk and stir until smooth. Pour soup into oven, add fresh or canned mushrooms, and stir well. Cover again and let simmer for 30 minutes. At this point, you may add cut-up potatoes, carrots, onions, celery, and simmer another 20 minutes. Vegetables will cook quickly in the Dutch oven. Meat will be very tender. Total cooking time is about 90 minutes, which is just about as long as the coals will remain.

CHUKKAR

Chukkar are members of the partridge family, renowned for their exasperating habit of running uphill to escape their captors. Joyce Scott, owner of Headlines Hair Design, Bishop, provides this delicious demise to her expert-marksman-husband's trophies.

Roll cleaned birds in Dixie Fry coating mix, salt and pepper to taste, brown in a small amount of olive oil. Chop garlic, onion, green pepper and celery (a total of about 1 cup per bird), add to pan, cover and simmer until vegetables are limp. Add 1 cup white wine and simmer 1 hour. Add 1 can mushrooms (or 1/2 lb. fresh sliced mushrooms) and simmer another 20 minutes. Serve immediately with wild rice.

PURPLE PLUM SAUCE

For any roasted wild birds, but especially good on breast of pheasant.

1 lg. can purple plums
1/4 cup butter
3 tblsp. minced onion
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tblsp. chili sauce
1 tsp. Worchestershire sauce
1/2 tsp. ground ginger

Drain the plums, reserving the liquid, and puree in blender. Melt butter in saucepan, briefly saute onion, stir in remaining ingredients, and plums with reserved liquid, and simmer about 30 minutes. Sauce may be spooned over bird, passed separately, or used as a basting sauce during the last half hour the bird is cooking.

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VENISON PIE

A hearty main dish for cold winter evenings. We received several variations of this recipe; it's one that lends itself well to leftovers and experimentation.

To remove the gamey taste sometimes found in stew meat, cover the meat with water and boil for a few minutes. Discard the water (or mix it with your dog's dinner—he'll love it), rinse the meat well in cold water.

2 lbs. venison stew meat, cut into 1" pieces
1 onion, chopped
1 cup sliced carrots
1 cup cooked peas or green beans (or other leftovers)
1/2 lb. mushrooms, sliced
4 tblsp. chopped parsley
1 cup heavy white sauce
1 batch biscuits (homemade or Bisquick type)

Cover meat with water, add salt and pepper to taste, and simmer two hours or until meat is tender. Add vegetables during the last half hour of cooking, depending on whether they are fresh or 'already-blessed.' Thin down the white sauce slightly with some of the stew liquid. Place meat and vegetables in a well-buttered casserole, and pour white sauce over. Sprinkle with parsley. Top with biscuits dipped in melted butter, and bake at 400 until biscuits are lightly browned.

MIXED BAG

Three quail, two ducks and one chukkar left in the freezer? Try this for your next dinner party.

Thaw, then cut birds into quarters, or halves, depending on their size. Place in large pot, add 1/4 cup butter. Cover birds with a mixture (to your taste) of dry white wine, teriyaki sauce, and water. Simmer slowly for about 15 minutes, testing birds often, since overcooking will make them tough. Serve with wild rice, all your favorite garden vegetables (either steamed or fried in tempura fashion), and a side dish of currant jelly.

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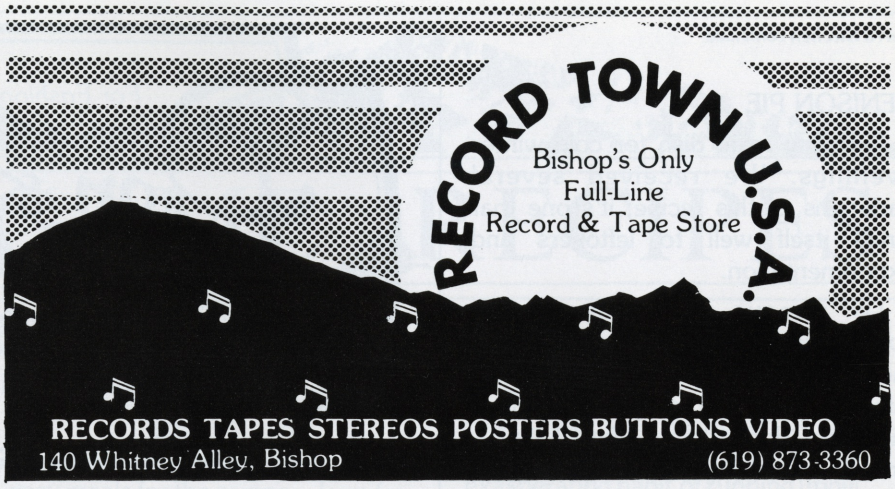

***Morhardt** continued*

will recognize instinctively whether a scene is a composition or not."

After 27 years of teaching, Morhardt applied himself to painting, but always continued to write, compose and prospect. He has written screen plays, short stories and books, and with his mining partner, Lee Early, wrote three western novels. In his files are the unpublished manuscripts of two autobiographical accounts of the Zane Grey years and his exciting, frustrating, often funny adventures in prospecting. He has published articles in everything from education to travel magazines, as well as his photographs and five books of poetry, and has made several records.

Morhardt also organized the Bishop High School "El Pinon" yearbook for eleven years, headed up the California Scholarship Federation chapter, taught art, civics, skiing and drama, composed the school's *alma mater*, and composed and directed an orchestral suite for Bishop's City Centennial. He is a charter member of the Eastern Sierra Ski Association, was staff photographer for the Inyo Mono Association, and has discovered a new species of trace fossil, the *Vittichnus morhardti*, as well as an ancestor trace fossil predating the earliest one known by 300 million years, and a new world-class gemstone, Manganoan Clino-Zoisite.

His latest publication celebrated the centennial of South Dakota's poet laureate, Badger Clark, in June 1983. His latest show was an evening of his own poetry and songs, at the invitation of the Bishop Civic Arts Commission, in December 1982.

"I think anybody can do seventy-five percent of the world's work, but most of them are afraid to try," 'Aim says. "I've just been fortunate to have had the opportunity."

Actually, his life is an inspiration and a challenge. To have done so many things so well, to have maintained a good marriage to a beautiful woman talented in her own right, to have raised an accomplished son and daughter, and to look forward with the vigor and enthusiasm of youth to all that is still to come, is truly the great American dream.

How does Joseph Emil Morhardt feel to have accomplished so much, yet never to have achieved the international fame that doubtless could have been his, had he concentrated on one talent and commercialized it?

Too bad. To have spent so much time
And effort and hopefulness
Only to find frustration at its end!
How sad. To look back on life's long years
With their rush and their turmoil
And know, as final critic, so little said;
Yet who, creative, but in retrospect
Sees flaws in every work, perfection's mark
To few is given, few attain
The misty empyrean peak
And that posthumously ... what bitter jest,
Like Chopin, dead at thirty-three
In poverty!
Bitter the ending yet we had no choice
For all are driven, and creation's urge
Does not spare you, who are
unbidden, slave;
Does not spare you whatever is the price.

We are pushed on by cosmic wind,
whose force
Sends us like solar sail toward
unthought place,
All outward bound, breeze-wafted
thistledown
In endless race.

innocently involved in bootlegging. His stepfather helped gather up the large collection of pretty jugs and bottles. They returned them to the well-concealed creek where Bob had found them. Bootleggers were serious and dangerous people, he was told, and not to be trifled with.

When the CCC, WPA and Welfare came to the area, Bob steered clear of them. He'd been finding his own jobs in his own way for a long time. He valued the independence that comes from looking after his own family's welfare. Occasionally a truant officer would nab him and he'd spend a couple of days in school. But they knew he had to work and did not pressure him unless they were being pressured by higher officials. His sister, Dorothy, married at 15 and lived at home. She soon had three little girls of her own. Bob fed them all.

The abundance of game existing in the Owens Valley during the early years made it possible for families to feed themselves as well as they did. Unfortunately, however, continued hunting finally threatened with extinction such animals as the big elks. In an effort to save these animals, heavy fines were levied against those found killing them. Thus comes the story of Bob's greatest hunting feat — a story confirmed not by Bob, but by his stepfather. Bob, then twelve, was one of a group hunting on the river. After some time he came rushing up to the others in great excitement, exclaiming that he'd shot the biggest deer he'd ever seen — with a twenty-two rifle.

Right enough! There it was with a clean shot through the head. But the 9-point deer was a bull elk! The fine for this offense could be $500. One of the men dismembered it and threw it into the deepest part of the river. He had known "Bobby" all his life, had seen him bravely face every kind of tragedy and sorrow. The saddest day was when he watched his trophy dumped into the river, knowing he could never even brag about it.

I met Bob in 1938, when the worst of the Depression was over. We married in 1940. I inherited the Owens Valley with the mixed feelings of a young bride meeting a passel of in-laws all at once.

When I first saw Bishop it was not the same little town Bob remembered. The people talked a great deal of the past. Businesses, such as McMurtrie Dairy, that had closed their doors, were mentioned as if contemporary. JC Penney used to be northeast on Main Street. People still directed folks there instead of southwest. I soon got to be much like them. We haven't had "dime stores" since the forties. Yet I continue to call them that as if they still bore the legend, "Nothing over 49¢."

Yesterday someone asked Bob, "Where's the Thrift Shop?" He answered, "On southwest Main, where Chickenfoot Smith used to be, by a slough." Nearly 45 years have come and gone and he still sees a business of today secondarily to what was there yesterday.

It was the same everywhere, you say? Right! So, you remember Main Street wherever you were and we'll dream of Main Street, Bishop, back when the town was young. ∎

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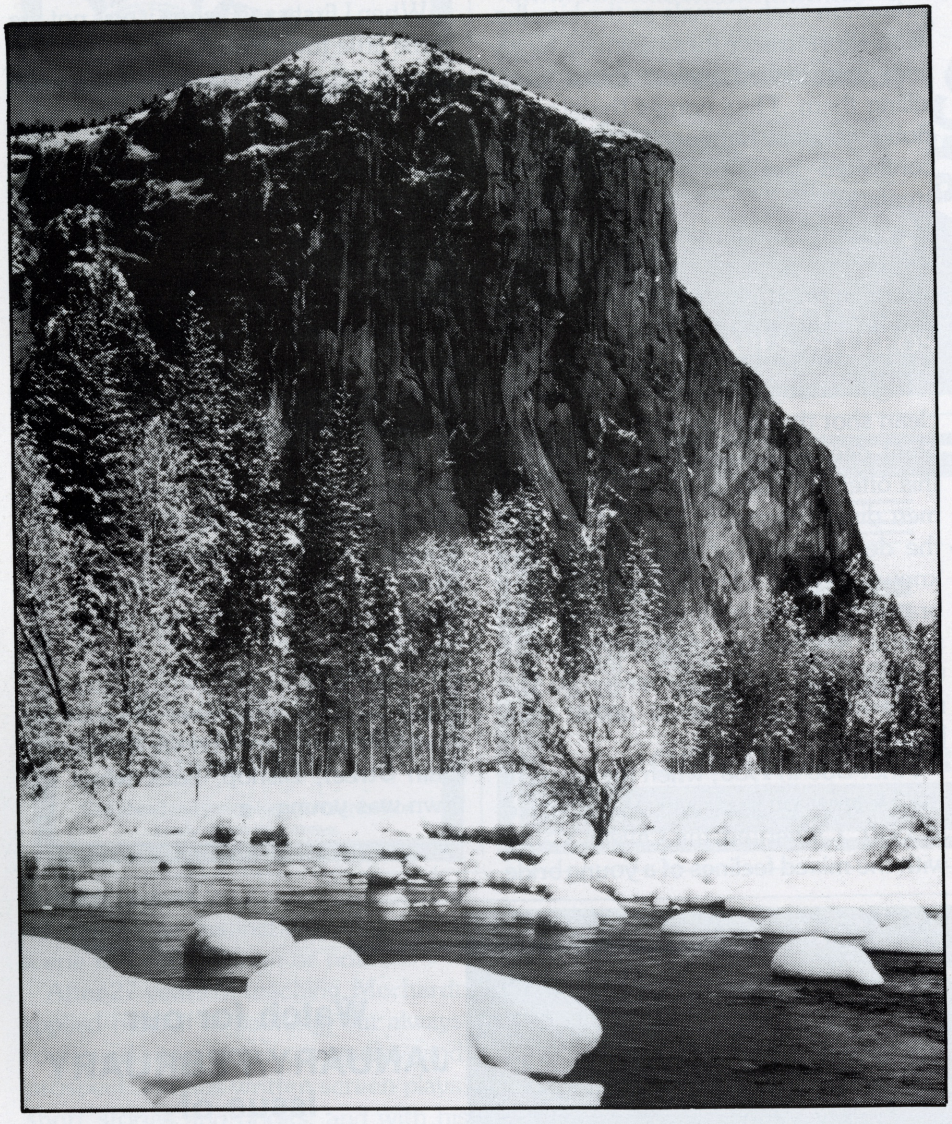

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CARSON PEAK VENISON STEAKS

No need to marinate in this tasty and easy recipe from Dorothy at Frontier Pack Train, June Lake. Venison chops can be substituted for the steaks.

2 lbs. venison steaks, 1" thick
2 large purple onions, chopped
2 large bell peppers, chopped
1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced
flour
salt, pepper, garlic powder
3/4 cup butter-flavored oil or shortening

In large skillet, saute onions, peppers and mushrooms until just soft. Push them to the side of the pan. Dredge steaks in flour, place in pan, sprinkle with salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste. Place vegetable mixture on top of the steaks, cover and simmer 15-20 minutes on medium low heat. When brown, turn the steaks, placing the vegetables back on top of the meat. Cover and simmer for another 15 minutes, or until browned and meat is tender. A little beef broth can be added if the meat appears to be drying out. Venison is most tender when not overcooked. Serves 4.

BAKED TROUT

An alternative to pan-frying or BBQ, this recipe has been successfully multiplied to cook two dozen trout at one time!

4 whole trout, cleaned
1/4 lb. butter
6 slices Sheepherder bread
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 cup chopped parsley
lemons

Crumble bread with a fork or food processor to make crumbs. Melt butter in skillet; add bread crumbs, garlic and parsley. Saute until crumbs are lightly crispy and all butter is absorbed. Squeeze the juice of one lemon into and over the trout; place them in a single layer in a well-greased pan. Sprinkle the crumb mixture over the trout. Bake at 350 for approximately 20-25 minutes, depending on size of trout. Fish will flake easily when done. Wild trout will retain its pinkish color, so don't overcook. Serve immediately with lemon wedges. ■

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